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Big Meeting Day, and other
festival tales

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Big Meeting Day

and Other Festival Tales

Illustrated by Billie Nielsen

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Big Meeting Day
and Other Festival Tales

Big Meeting Day

MARY ELLEN came home from school with a piece of news for Granny, which Step-Along, the peddler had stopped to announce that day. The Preacher Man was coming to Near-Side on Saturday and stay over the week end for Big Meeting. He would preach twice on Sunday, once in the morning and again in the afternoon. Folks would bring their dinners to church and stay all day, from mid-morning till dusky-dark.

“It’ll be like a picnic,” Mary Ellen said.

She liked Big Meeting. It was always a wonderful day, with much singing, lots of good food and visiting between sermons. Folks came from Far-Side many miles away. Kinfolks, friends and neighbors had a chance to see one another on Big Meeting Day.

Uncle Eb Owens and Aunt Abigail would ride up No-End Hollow. Cousin Liza Lewis would traipse all the way from the other side of Huckleberry Hill—seven long mountain miles—with her ten children behind her. All these and many more would come—all laden with food. There would be a hundred different kinds when it was put together on the ground under the tall pine trees.

Mary Ellen's mouth watered just to think about it. Oh, what a wonderful thing it was, that Big Meeting Day feast! Fried chicken, baked chicken, chicken

and dumplings. Apple, peach and huckleberry pie. And there would be at least a dozen different kinds of cake.

Mary Ellen drew a long breath. With the next she asked a question: "Oh, Granny, will you let me help you when you make the big stack-cake?"

This was a very special cake made for special occasions like birthdays, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Big Meeting Day. It might be from two to ten layers high with plain fruit or fancy-fine filling, depending on the kind and amount of material a person had on hand.

This was Friday. Granny Allen said: "We'll make the stack-cake tomorrow. And of course I'll let you help."

Mary Ellen danced with glee all about the kitchen. There was nothing—nothing—she liked better than helping Granny make a cake! And to help make

the cake for Big Meeting Day would be extra-special. "Oh, goody, goody!" She gave a joyful shout.

Granny Allen's thoughts were on more serious matters.

"It will do me good, body and soul, to go to Big Meeting again. Seems far back and long ago since I heard Brother Martin preach from the Good Book. It's always good news when we know he's headed this way."

On that side of the mountain, the visits of the Circuit Rider were few and far between. There was no regular preaching time, because Brother Martin went to so many far-back settlements. He came to Near-Side as often as he could. Once a year in the fall, before cold weather, he called the folks together for Big Meeting. It was a joyful day for young and old.

All the rest of that day Mary Ellen and Granny Allen talked about it.

Tomorrow they would make the stack-cake for Big Meeting Day!

Right after breakfast next morning they got ready. Mary Ellen went to the woodpile for a basket of chips to make a clear, bright fire. Granny went to the cellar for the molasses jug. Molasses, or "long sweetening" was used by most folks on Near-Side-And-Far, instead of sugar. Nearly every family grew a patch of sorghum cane for molasses making in the fall. Granny didn't make her own molasses, but got a jugful from a neighbor every now and then.

Mary Ellen came in with the chips and made up the fire in a hurry.

"Now I'm ready to help you with the cake, Granny," she said.

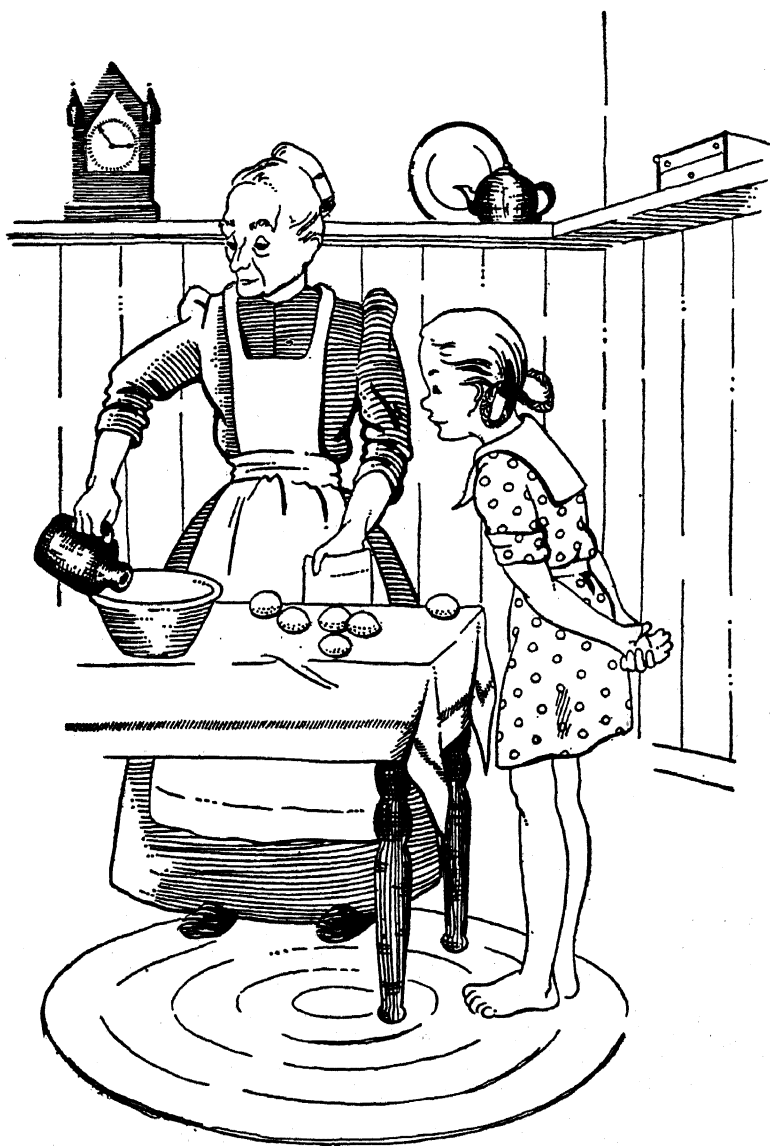
“Go to the barn for some fresh eggs. Bring back six,” said Granny.

Mary Ellen got a basket and hurried away. “Six eggs!” she thought to herself. “It’s going to be a big cake! Goody-goody!”

Maybe there’d be a bit of batter left over. Sometimes there was enough to make a little cake on the griddle like a hoe-cake. Only much better because it was spicy and sweet. At least she would get to scrape the bowl and lick the last morsel of gold-brown batter from the big wooden spoon!

When Mary Ellen got back with the eggs Granny was standing by the table tilting the molasses jug over a mixing bowl. A little, lazy trickle ran out—nothing but a dribble that ended with a long, last drop.

Granny Allen shook her head. “That’s the trouble with this old jug. It’s so big



and heavy, you can't tell when the molasses is nigh about gone. But it's gone now—all gone. It's too bad, honey, but I reckon we'll have to give up the notion of making a stack-cake."

Mary Ellen drew a sighful breath. For about half-a-minute she felt like crying with disappointment. In her mind she could see that lovely cake, as plain as a picture. To think that now it couldn't come true. She couldn't bear to think of it!

"Never mind, honey," Granny said. "I'll make up a batch of biscuit. I've got the makings on hand for extra nice biscuit bread. With butter and huckleberry jam they'll do for the picnic dinner at Big Meeting tomorrow."

"Yes," Mary Ellen agreed. Granny was trying to comfort her, so she must try to be cheerful.

"I'll go and bring in another basket of chips," she said.

But Granny had something else in mind: "How would you like the notion of going down to Crossroads Store with these eggs? We can't use 'em in a cake now, so we might as well sell 'em and save what little money they bring for a rainy day."

A journey-jault to Crossroads Store would be nice, thought Mary Ellen. Soon, with a fresh dress and bonnet on, she was on her way.

Halfway to the store down the hollow trail she met her friend, Lovie.

"Oh," cried Lovie, "what a surprise! I am on my way to your house to borrow some eggs. Mammy needs half-a-dozen to make that cake she always bakes for Big Meeting Day—a molasses ginger cake!"

Mary Ellen laughed. "It's your lucky day! I have that many in this basket. I'm

on my way to sell them at Crossroads Store. But I'll just let you have them. Granny would want me to do that, I'm certain-sure."

"Oh," said Lovie. "I'm mighty much obliged. It'll tickle Mammy to pieces. She couldn't make her cake at all without those eggs."

"We were going to make a cake, too," Mary Ellen said sadly, "but there wasn't enough molasses left in the jug."

"Oh, that's too bad!" Lovie said. "But why didn't you borrow enough molasses to make a cake? If you'll go home with me, my mammy will let you have some now. We've got aplenty."

Mary Ellen looked worried as she thought a minute. "But now there won't be any eggs to make our cake—if I give you these! It takes eggs and molasses to

make the kind of cake that Granny bakes for Big Meeting Day!"

Lovie was looking worried, too. She and Mary Ellen just stood there in the middle of the trail, doing their best to think of an answer to the riddle. What to do? Mary Ellen's thoughts were flying round about in her head like a whirligig. Then, all of a sudden, she knew how to solve the problem as easy as spelling cat!

"I'll swap you some of my eggs," she said, "for some of your molasses. Then my granny and your mammy can both make a cake! Not a big cake—just a half-size one. But Granny is always saying 'half a loaf of bread is better than none.' I guess that goes for cake, too, don't you, Lovie?"

She was smiling now, and Lovie smiled, too.

"I reckon you're right," she said happily.

Big Meeting Day was as beautiful as could have been expected. The sun ball rose above the mountain bright and clear, taking the chill from the morning air. Long before time for the services many people had gathered from Near-Side-And-Far. Men, women, boys, girls, babies and hound dogs made up the crowd that filled the pine grove in front of the meeting house. Mary Ellen and Lovie skipped about arm in arm to speak to friends and kin they had not met for a long time. Each girl had on her best dress—neither one new, but both freshly washed, starched and ironed for the occasion. Mary Ellen's was a pink gingham; Lovie Lane's was blue.

"Howdy, honey, how you've grown!" This was the greeting given by all the

grownups as they went about. The young folks usually only smiled and murmured "Howdy." This shyness would pass away on the picnic ground when the big dinner was spread.

Here came Uncle Eb Owens and his wife riding up the hollow, each with a large dinner basket hung over an arm. Here came Cousin Liza and all her children, all carrying baskets and bags except the very youngest one.

And still the folks kept coming from up and down the mountain.

"Too many folks for the meeting house," declared the preacher man. So they had the service outdoors; and he talked to them from a stump. Some of the people sat up front on benches. Others on logs which had been rolled up. The rest sat on the ground or stood up, just as

they pleased. A breeze came up the hollow and made music in the pine tops, a low sweet sound.

“Like someone humming a hymn,” thought Mary Ellen, remembering how Granny often sang to herself.

“The mountain is singing its own song,” she kept thinking, liking this notion very much. It came to her just as the people all about her started the hymn, “O, Happy Day!” And it seemed to Mary Ellen as if they all felt the spirit of gladness, too.

Brother Martin preached that day on “Working Together,” taking his text from the Good Book, and proving line by line that folks ought to share what they have and help one another.

“I’ll tell you a little story,” he said. “to help you understand what is meant by co-operation.”

“Mighty big word. Never heard it

before," somebody said in a whisper that Mary Ellen heard just behind her.

"Co-op—" she tried to say it under her breath. A regular tongue-twister, it was! But Brother Martin was speaking, going on to explain what the big word meant.

"Co-operation," he said, "is working together. Folks can work together in little ways as well as big. This story will show you what I mean."

Brother Martin looked all around him, and with a smile on his face, he told them the story of the two cakes.

While he talked, Mary Ellen and Lovie sat close together.

"What about that?" whispered Mary Ellen. "He's talking about us!"

But there was no more whispering then, for just then Granny nudged her, reminding her to be quiet while preaching was going on.

Brother Martin went on to explain more about co-operation. He tried to make the people understand all about that big word. He told how it is good to share what we have and help one another.

“Amen!” came a shout now and then from the crowd to show that the folks understood.

“Remember,” Brother Martin said, “the good that comes of sharing. Remember the story about the two cakes.”

After the service a lot of folks went up to tell Brother Martin that this was the best sermon they’d ever heard him preach.

Granny and Mary Ellen went up, too. When the Preacher Man shook hands with her, Mary Ellen asked the question she had been wanting to ask.

“How did you know about those cakes, Brother Martin?”

The Preacher Man’s eyes twinkled. “I

heard the tale," he said, "at Brother Lane's where I stayed last night."

"Oh!—I reckon Lovie told you!" Mary Ellen laughed.

And now it was time to spread the picnic dinner under the pine trees.

"Come, share dinner with us," was the invitation that went around on all sides.

Granny Allen and the Lanes spread their dinners together.

"I'll eat a piece of your cake, Lovie," said Mary Ellen, "and you must have one of mine."



The Donkey Who Liked Music

IN August when the moon is full, the people of Santa Barbara, the little California city by the Pacific Ocean, give a fiesta to commemorate the colorful Spanish days of long ago. It is a time of dancing and singing in the streets. Everyone wears a costume. Pageants are staged, and the parades feature historical floats and many horses.

Miguel, a ten-year-old Mexican-American boy, was especially fond of this fiesta. His father rode a horse in the

parade every year. A large handsome man, he appeared as an early Spanish governor and always drew applause. Miguel himself, dressed in sombrero and red sash, walked about the streets strumming on his guitar. It is true that he could only play two songs, but these were *Cielito Lindo* and the lively *La Cucaracha*, everyone's favorites at fiesta time.

One summer, however, Miguel did not have the fiesta spirit. He told his friend Johnny that he was going to stay home. The two boys were at Miguel's place, where his father had a large fruit and vegetable stand on the highway near Santa Barbara. The family lived behind it, in a little wooden house surrounded by vegetable gardens.

"But why miss the fiesta?" Johnny asked. "Isn't your Dad riding again this year?"

"Oh, sure, but I don't want to go."

Johnny could not understand this, because ever since school closed in June Miguel had been making plans for the fiesta. Puzzled, Johnny stared at the neat green rows of beans and tomatoes and corn. The wooden house, with heavily laden clotheslines stretched behind it. Standing sleepily at one side as motionless as a statue, was the old donkey, Sancho Panza, who had belonged to the family since before Miguel was born.

"Say, Miguel," Johnny said suddenly, "aren't you going to ride Sancho Panza in the Children's Parade again this year?"

To his astonishment tears came into Miguel's eyes. He turned away quickly so that Johnny couldn't watch his face.

"He's such a funny old donkey and so smart, you'd win a ribbon sure—"

"But I—I can't," Miguel said, sniffing and wiping his nose on his shirtsleeve.

Then the reason why Miguel felt unhappy came out. His father had decided to get rid of old Sancho Panza. The donkey was of no earthly use to anyone, his father said. He was contrary and crotchety. He often wandered off and had to be searched for. Worse, he had a positive genius for getting into the gardens and trampling the vegetables underfoot. Miguel's father said his patience was at an end. He positively refused to put up with such a nuisance any longer.

Now Miguel loved the old donkey and he believed, though it was hard to tell what Sancho Panza thought, that the donkey loved him. Moreover, he was really a remarkable beast. No one knew how Miguel's father had obtained him, but Miguel was sure that he had once belonged to a circus. For whenever Miguel played his guitar, Sancho Panza

moved his head gently from side to side in time with the music. And, sometimes, he actually danced a few steps to the sprightly rhythms of *La Cucaracha*.

To be sure, Miguel admitted that there *was* another side to Sancho Panza's nature. He was full of whims and unexpected tricks. If you rode him, he liked to sit down suddenly on his haunches, so that you had to grab his neck to keep from sliding off his back. You could never be sure when it would enter his head to stop short and stand motionless, even in a crowded street. He showed few signs of liking people, but he quickly let you know, by his snorts of disgust, when he didn't like you. Miguel was the only person he allowed to ride him. And often he refused this favor even to Miguel!

Still, when you have had the same donkey all your life, you naturally hate to

give him up. Johnny understood how Miguel felt. As Johnny thought about the problem, he became convinced that there was only one thing to do. Sancho Panza must go to the fiesta and perform for the people.

"That's no good," said Miguel. "Don't you remember how he sat down right in the midst of the Children's Parade last year? I had to take him out."

"Oh, we've got to do something more this time," Johnny said. "Will he *always* dance when you play *La Cucaracha*?"

"He won't always do anything," Miguel said gloomily. "Sometimes he'll dance. Sometimes he just stands there, with that stubborn look on his face."

"Well, we'll have to risk it. Look, the Governor always comes to the big historical parade. If you can get Sancho Panza to dance in front of the Governor,

everyone will hear of it and he'll be famous."

"But the Governor rides in the parade."

"Oh, he'll be around afterwards."

The beginning of August found the city crowded with visitors, many wearing Spanish or 'Forty-niner costumes. On the first evening when the bells of the Old Mission rang out, the priest stood on the steps and blessed the crowd, signifying that the fiesta had begun.

The big parade on the second day told the story of Santa Barbara from the early times of Cabrillo and Sir Francis Drake and Portola to the raising of the American flag, July 14, 1846. As in previous years, Miguel's father, on his white horse, looked like a Spanish don of the Golden Age.

All the time the parade was moving down State Street and west along Cabrillo

Boulevard, Miguel and Johnny were busy grooming Sancho Panza for his appearance before the Governor. After he was well brushed they hung a garland of red hibiscus round his neck. They put a brilliant serape across his back. Then Miguel mounted him, his guitar slung across his shoulders. Miguel wore his sombrero and sash, Johnny the costume of a frontier scout. Luckily, Sancho Panza seemed in a fairly good humor when they started out, and Johnny led him by a rope toward the city.

When they arrived, the parade was over and many people were milling about in the streets. The little procession of two boys and a donkey aroused immediate interest. Several people called to Miguel to play something on his guitar. After a while, Johnny stopped and asked a friendly policeman where they could find

the Governor. But the policeman didn't know. They moved on slowly through crowded streets. It was growing late. Moreover, Johnny had no idea where the Governor was.

Suddenly the horn of a nearby automobile honked loudly. Startled, Sancho Panza stopped short. He put back his ears, he set his feet, he refused to take another step. Miguel urged him, and Johnny pulled on the rope. But the irate donkey simply wouldn't budge.

"Play his song," Johnny said.

So Miguel began to play and sing, but Sancho Panza pretended not to hear. Johnny went up to him and sang in his ear, "*La cucaracha! la cucaracha!*" But all he received for his efforts was a baleful glance.

"It's no good," said Miguel in despair. "He won't move. And he wouldn't dance

anyway, not the way he's feeling now."

At this moment a group of street singers, dressed as Spanish *caballeros*, strolled past and, suddenly striking up their guitars, broke into *Cielito Lindo*. At once Sancho Panza relaxed. Then, before the boys realized what he was up to, he turned around and followed the singers. Johnny tugged on the rope to hold him back, but the donkey's mind was made up and he kept on. Miguel clung to his neck and Johnny was forced to follow along at his side.

Many people cheered the donkey and the two boys, thinking that they were part of the show. When they came to the plaza in front of a hotel, the chief singer, a fat little man with a flushed, worried face, stepped back and gestured toward the donkey.

"Whose is he? Hey, there, you boys!

Take him away. He doesn't belong with us."

"But I can't budge him," Johnny panted.

By this time a large crowd had gathered. Shrugging his shoulders, the singer turned to his companions and gave a signal. Guitars twanged. A gay song rang out. Immediately, on the balcony of the hotel, the Governor and his party came out to wave to the singers. Whereupon, they swung into the fast, gay measures of *La Cucaracha*, that perennially popular dance of old Mexico. Johnny saw the Governor's hand beating time to the music.

Suddenly the people beside Johnny began to laugh. Looking around, he saw that Sancho Panza was dancing. The donkey crossed one foreleg over the other, then reversed himself. The laughter became cheers. The Governor clapped

his hands, and smilingly turned to one of his party and nodded toward Sancho Panza.

When the song was over, some newspaper men bustled up. "Say, where did that dancing donkey come from?" one of them asked.

"Who knows?" shrugged the fat little singer. "He just followed us."

"Well, he's stolen the show," the reporter said.

The reporters focused their cameras on Sancho Panza and the two boys. Sancho Panza let them take one picture, but after that he became annoyed and wouldn't look at the camera.

At this moment Miguel's father appeared.

"So this is where you are!" he exclaimed. "I've been looking all over. And the donkey too! Ah, this is the last straw!"

But the Governor had come down from the porch and now joined them. "Sir," he said, shaking hands with Miguel's father, "if this is your donkey, I congratulate you. He's the star of the fiesta."

"Ah, Señor Governor, he's an infernal pest, that one," said Miguel's father. But he looked pleased, and Miguel, grinning widely, winked at Johnny.

"Get him to dance again," said a television man who had come up.

"Bravo!" said the Governor, clapping his hands.

When the street singers struck up *La Cucaracha*, everyone looked expectantly at Sancho Panza. For a moment he seemed on the point of dancing. Then, with a curl of his upper lip, he suddenly sat down on his haunches, right in the center of the plaza, and no one, reporters, television



men, nor even the Governor, could get him to stir. But neither Miguel nor Johnny cared now, for they had both been part of the fiesta. Miguel's unpredictable donkey was assured of a carefree life for the rest of his days, because he had been a part of it too.

A Camellia for John McDonogh

THE soft voice of Cook Angelique came to Yvonne's ears as she lay beneath the white sheet which she had drawn over her head to shut out the warm May sunlight.

“Wake up! Wake up! you sleepy-head.

Get up! Get up! you stay-in-bed.”

She threw back the sheet and the rays, streaming through the open window, danced about the room and gleamed on her dark curls.

“But Angelique,” said Mary, “I don’t

have to go to school today. Have you forgotten that this is a holiday?"

"McDonogh Day," said Angelique promptly, "and you are to have your breakfast just outside the window on the balcony. Then you and I will pick flowers in the patio and join the crowds of New Orleans children on their way to Lafayette Square to decorate the statue of John McDonogh."

"I am big enough to go alone," said Yvonne, bouncing lightly out of bed and standing before the long mirror to stretch herself to the full height her ten years of growing had given her.

"You forget," said Angelique, "that I too, when I was a small girl, went to a McDonogh School."

In a few moments Yvonne, wearing her candy-striped Sunday dress—the one with the ruffles about the hem—sat at a little

table on the iron balcony outside her window, drinking her orange juice and eating her cereal. The sunlight was hot and the big leaves of the banana tree rustled gently beside her as a little breeze stirred them. She still felt sleepy.

"It is too hot to pick flowers," she said, looking down into the sunny patio—the little walled garden beside the house.

"It is never too hot to do a good deed," said Angelique. "Drink the rest of your milk."

Soon Yvonne had gone down the circular stairs to the ground floor of the house.

"Good morning, darling," said her mother, bending down to kiss her. "Pick only the loveliest flowers in the patio to put on Mr. McDonogh's statue. And remember that he did more for the children of New Orleans than anyone."

In the patio the oleanders were blooming and the white blossoms of the cape jasmine and the sweet olive made the air smell sweet and fresh. Against the old gray wall the blooms of the climbing Rose of Montana made hundreds of round, coral-colored spots. Beside the house, as if marching like a regiment of soldiers in scarlet and purple uniforms, the begonias were bright in the sun.

"I want camellias," said Yvonne picking busily. "I like camellias best of all."

"I'm afraid there aren't any," said Cook Angelique. "I picked all there were for your mother's party last week."

Both Cook Angelique and Yvonne looked over the camellia plants very carefully. At first they could find no blossoms. But they kept looking and finally, deep among the cool green leaves, they suddenly came upon a bloom bigger

than either one of them had ever seen. Its center was pure white, but the edges of its petals were bright red—as if they had been dipped lightly in red ink.

Yvonne picked the camellia and danced gaily about the patio.

“It is the prettiest camellia I ever saw,” she said.

“We must hurry now or we will be late,” said Angelique, and she opened the patio gate. Carrying big bouquets of the many-colored flowers, the two of them stepped out into narrow Royal Street and walked swiftly toward Canal Street, which runs through the middle of New Orleans and separates the oldest part of the town where they lived, from the part that was built afterwards.

By the time Cook Angelique and Yvonne came to wide Canal Street they could see hundreds of school children

going the same way, each one carrying a bunch of gay flowers. They crossed the street and a few minutes later they came to Lafayette Square. There was the New Orleans City Hall. Across the street from it was a green park and in the park stood a statue. The statue showed the head and shoulders of a man and it was set on a white stone pillar. The man's face was narrow and thin and his hair was long and arranged in an old-fashioned way. His collar was high under his chin and his necktie was wide and tied in a big bow. Below it were the man's shoulders and chest covered by a very old-fashioned coat.

The figure of a small boy stood beside the pillar. He was standing on tiptoe to place a handful of vines and flowers on the top of it. The figure of a little girl stood below him. She had a book in her left

hand and her right hand was reaching up as if she had just given the boy the vines and flowers.

A brass band was playing loudly as Angelique and Yvonne came into the square. When the music stopped they saw that the whole square was lined with children—thousands of them. Many of their faces were as white as Yvonne's, some were brown, and some were even as black as Angelique's.

Then a chorus of children's voices began to sing and at the same time all the singers walked toward the statue. Yvonne could hear the words quite distinctly after a while.

Flowers fade but those other
Choicer plants that claim they care—
Minds and hearts that grow together—
They will do thee honor here.

From thy happy home above
Home amid the brightest skies
Watch us on this day of love
With exultant eyes.

Then all the children in the chorus began to throw their flowers on the statue. Soon the mound of blossoms grew so big that it was above the knees of the figure of the little girl.

"I will go and put my flowers with theirs," said Yvonne eagerly and she ran toward the statue. When she came back to Angelique a few moments later all her flowers were gone except one—the big camellia.

"Cook Angelique," said Yvonne, "I could not bear to throw away this biggest camellia I have ever seen. It is too beautiful. Besides, there are so many flowers this one will not be missed. See

the little girl is almost covered with them now. Who was she, Cook Angelique? Was she one of Mr. McDonogh's children?"

"Mr. McDonogh was not her father," said Angelique, "but she was one of his children and so am I and so are you."

"How could that be, Angelique?" said Yvonne. "I don't see how it could be true."

"Those children were Edward Bienvenue and Lucie Toujan," said Angelique, "and they were chosen by the man who made the statue, Mr. Repetto, from all the school children in New Orleans to be the ones he would show giving Mr. McDonogh flowers."

"Did they know Mr. McDonogh?" asked Yvonne.

"No, child," said Angelique.

"And how do you know they were Edward and Lucie?"

"Because I saw them once when I was a little girl more than fifty years ago. People used to point them out and say Mr. Repetto had tried to make the children of the statue look like them."

"And why did Mr. Repetto have the figures giving vines and flowers to Mr. McDonogh?" asked Yvonne.

Just as Angelique began the answer the band began to play the *Star Spangled Banner*. So both Yvonne and Angelique stood straight and still until it had finished. No sooner had it played the last note than all the children in the square began hurrying towards their homes. They raced out of the square, shouting their good-bys as they ran. In a few minutes Angelique and Yvonne were standing alone before the statue which had been so

covered with flowers that only the head of the likeness of Mr. McDonogh was showing above them.

"Let us sit down on the park bench," said Angelique. "I want to tell you about a little girl who had dark curls like you and who did know Mr. McDonogh."

"What was her name?" said Yvonne at once.

"No one knows. But all the great City of New Orleans should be thankful to her and her kind heart."

"Why, Angelique? Why?"

"Once upon a time," said Angelique, settling herself comfortably upon the bench, "John McDonogh was a fine, up-standing young man. He had been sent by his employer in Baltimore to New Orleans to attend to some business. He did this so well that he became very rich and went into business for himself. He

had a home here and he wore beautiful clothes and ate delicious and expensive foods. He was very gay and went to many parties and had many friends.

“Then, something happened that changed John McDonogh. Some folks say his doctor told him that he was ill and must live more quietly and carefully. Others tell that he wanted to make a beautiful, rich young lady his wife but that she would not marry him. Whatever it was, John McDonogh gave up his fine home and all his friends. He moved across the Mississippi River to live in a simple small house on the other side. He hardly ever smiled after that and he paid no attention to all the people he had known. He was interested only in buying and selling land. He did very well at this and the acres he had bought became more and more valuable as time went on. Folks said

he was the richest man in New Orleans; then the richest man in all the South. Folks said he was a miser, too, because he had so much money but never spent it.

“Years went by and the people of New Orleans began to make fun of the tall, thin old man, who once in a while came across the river to do business in the city. His hair was combed back and tied at the back of his neck in a fashion long since gone by. On his head was a tall, round gray hat. He wore a long, bright blue tail-coat decorated with shining brass buttons. The collar of his shirt came up around his chin and was held in place by a wide white tie that was wound around it. Though everyone knew he had a great deal of money, old-fashioned pantaloons and worn old shoes made John McDonogh look very poor. So did the faded blue silk umbrella that he carried rain or shine, wherever he went.

“The little girls who used to go to the old Franklin School that stood on the corner of St. Charles Avenue and Girard Street walked by the office of the strange old miser every school-day. Often they saw him sitting at his desk in his queer old clothes, looking very stern, never smiling. Some of the girls used to laugh at him as they passed but there was one with dark eyes and dark hair like yours who did not laugh. She felt very sorry for the friendless old fellow. One day she picked a bunch of lovely flowers just as you did this morning and when she came to the office she stepped inside and walked up to John McDonogh. “Mister,” she said to the grim-lined face above her, “don’t you want some flowers?” And she put the blossoms she carried in his hands. Those who saw him take the flowers said that

suddenly tears overflowed his eyes and ran down his cheeks.

"I don't know that the little girl's gift made John McDonogh write what he wrote into his will before he died," said Angelique. "I just know that when the old miser's will was read aloud after his death the folks who were listening heard that the reason he had saved all his great riches was that he wanted to pay for the education of all the children of New Orleans—no matter what color they were or how poor. And he said these words—I learned them when I was a student in a McDonogh School—

" 'All that I ask in return is that the little children of New Orleans may come once a year and strew my grave with flowers.' "

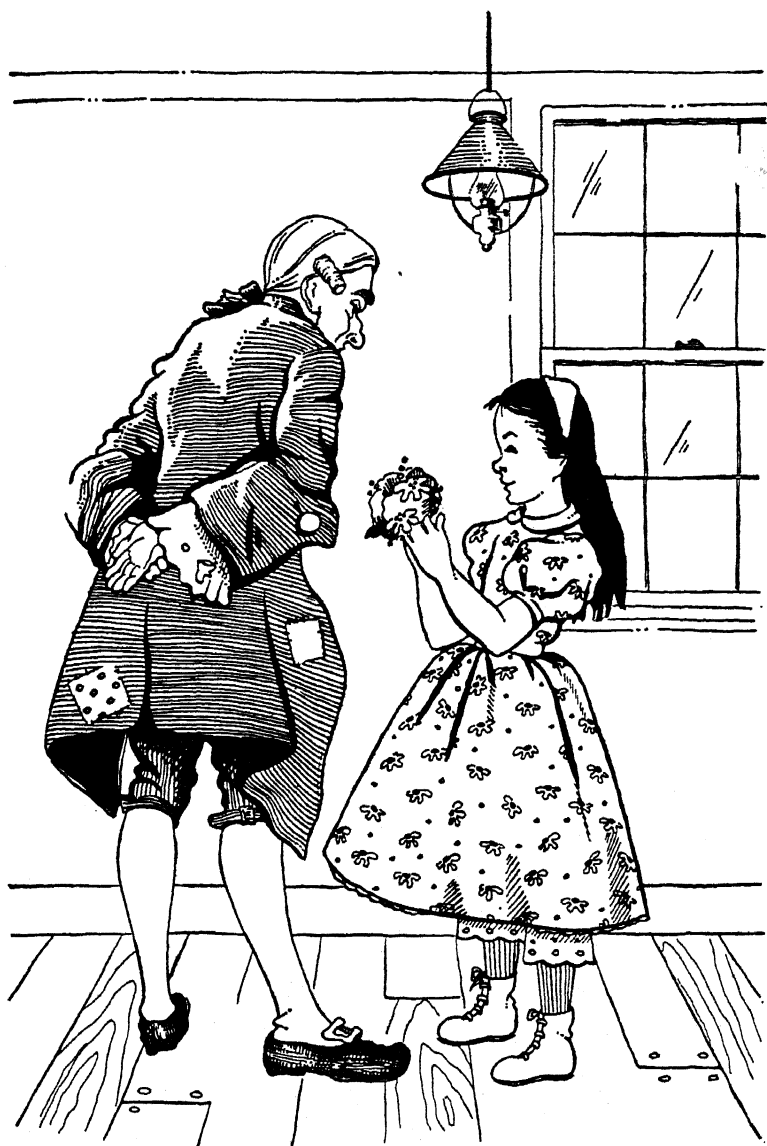
Suddenly the place on the bench beside

Angelique was empty. Yvonne was running across the green grass toward the statue.

"Yvonne, what are you doing?" called Angelique. "Come back, child, at once!"

But Yvonne had reached the base of the statue and was climbing a little wooden ladder left behind by those who had heaped flowers upon the figures of the two children. Now Yvonne stood beside the bronze figure of Lucie Toujan. Up she climbed to stand beside Edward Bienvenue. Then reaching high, she placed beside the cold bronze vines and flowers—the living, white and red bloom of her camellia—the biggest she had ever seen.

"There," she said, looking up at the long, thin face of John McDonogh, "this is for you with love."





Johanna Goes to the Fair

CLOP, clop, clop! That was the sound of the wooden shoes of Johanna Van der Bakker as she tramped over the floor of the great hall.

Click, click, click! That was the sound of Olga Andrushevsky's red leather boots as she stamped along too with one arm around Johanna's waist.

Sh, sh, sh! That was the sound of the soft slippers of Bonnie McCrindle as she skipped beside the other two with an arm around Olga.

They were best friends at school and here at the Festival of Nations they were best friends, too. Johanna's father had been born in Holland. She was wearing a pointed Dutch cap and a full skirt and apron. Olga's father and mother had come to America from the Ukraine. Long ribbon streamers hung down from her flower wreath. Bonnie's father was Scotch. She flipped her red plaid kilted skirt as she walked.

"Let's get some chocolate milk from your father's cart, Johanna," said Bonnie. "There is time before the dancing begins."

"Yes, let's," said Olga and Johanna. "It's over on the other side."

They clopped and clicked and sh'd around the hall. The booths of the different nations stood like houses around a village square. And the people in clothes of all the nations made it look like

an old world fair. They were laughing and chatting on their all-the-world spring holiday.

Olga, Johanna and Bonnie passed the Swedish booth where they sold lax-pudding and other Swedish things. And they passed the Danish booth with its pastry. And the Chinese and the Greek booths. They hurried by the English garden and the crumpets, and the Irish teashop and the Pioneer store. They were so thirsty for that chocolate milk that they did not even see the little drums and dolls that the Chippewa Indians were selling. Nor the Turkish sweetmeats.

They ran up to Mr. Van der Bakker's Dutch milk cart.

"Three bottles of chocolate milk, please," said Johanna.

Johanna's father's eyes were twinkling. He took the three nickels and gave them

three bottles of chocolate milk with straws.

"Dank," he said.

"Thanks," said Olga and Johanna and Bonnie, and they began sipping the milk slowly.

"Isn't it good?" said Olga.

"Oh, look!" cried Bonnie. "Look at your brother!"

There, in the Dutch booth, was Jan Van der Bakker helping himself to olie-bollen. He had one of the fritters in his mouth and one in each hand. They were good fritters with raisins and currants inside and out.

"Jan!" cried Johanna. "Oh, he's always into something, that child! Jan, put those down or you'll be sick."

"Gug, gug, gug," said Jan.

Olga and Bonnie giggled as they ran into the booth with Johanna.

"Jan," Johanna said, shaking him by the

arm, "you'll make yourself sick. You're only three years old and too little to eat so many!"

Jan's eyes were as big as saucers. He tried to stuff another fritter into his mouth.

"Mother!" called Johanna.

Mrs. Van der Bakker ran out from the kitchen behind the booth. She was laughing under her pointed cap.

"You bad boy," she said. "Put them down!"

Jan gave the fritters a last squeeze and dropped them on the floor. His mother wiped off his greasy fingers.

"You mustn't eat without asking first. Remember!"

Jan did not say a word—his mouth was too full. His cheeks looked like apples stuffed with the olie-bollen fritters.

"Come on, let's go!" said Johanna.



"That child! He's always into something."

"He must be fun," said Olga.

"Fun!" cried Johanna. "You ought to try living with him. He's awful!"

"I'd like him for a brother," said Olga. "He couldn't be too bad for me."

"He runs away too," said Johanna. "You have to watch him every minute."

"Well, I think he's fun," Olga said.

"And I do too," said Bonnie.

"All right. You may have him any time you want him, and welcome. And then you'll see. I'll even give him to you for nothing."

A gong sounded in the big hall and the people in the booths knew that now the dancing would begin.

"I must meet my father over there," said Bonnie. "We're the third number on the program."

"I'm to go around to our booth on the other side," said Olga.

"We Dutch are dancing tomorrow," said Johanna. "So today I can just watch you."

Bonnie ran sh, sh, toward the Scotch booth. Olga skipped click, click, to the Ukrainian one. And Johanna slid over the floor in her wooden shoes to join her family.

The musicians in the band were tuning up and making funny noises on their horns and fiddles. Johanna and Jan and their mother sat down in the front row beside the Chippewa Indians.

"Now sit still, Jan," said Johanna.

First there was a grand march of all the people who were to take part in the program. Two boys in American clothes each carrying an American flag led the procession. Then came the Chippewas,

and after them the Polish children. Third were the Scotch with Bonnie McCrindle stepping quickly along sh, sh, sh, in her soft slippers. Then the Ukrainians led by Olga Andrushevsky. She was the smallest of the Ukrainian children and she stamped along in her red boots.

Johanna clapped and cheered.

Jan shouted: "Hi!" as loud as he could. He liked Bonnie and Olga.

"Sit still, Jan," said Johanna.

She hardly saw the rest of the procession, the Italian children and the Czechs and the Russians. She was waiting for her best friends to dance. She hardly heard the Chippewa chief tell about the sign language of his people and sing his Indian songs. She hardly saw the Polish girls dancing in their flowered skirts and the boys in their red capes. She was waiting for Bonnie and Olga.

Jan cried: "Hi!" at everything that happened. He liked everybody.

"Sit still, Jan," said Johanna.

At last it was time for the Scotch dance. She could hear the squealing of the bagpipes and out on the floor marched Bonnie McCrindle, her sister and her father.

"Hi!" yelled Jan. He was standing on the bench waving his arms.

"Sit down, Jan," Johanna whispered.

Bonnie McCrindle and her sister danced the Highland Fling, while their father blew on his bagpipes.

"Hi!" shouted Jan. He liked Bonnie McCrindle. "Hi!" he shouted.

"Keep still," said Johanna. "Sit down, Jan."

But her eyes were fast on Bonnie as she danced the Highland Fling. Bonnie's brown curls bobbed under her Scotch cap.

Her plaid kilted skirt swung flip, flop. Her feet in her soft slippers skipped and stepped and turned.

Johanna clapped loudly when the dance was over and the audience clapped too. Wasn't she proud of being Bonnie's best friend!

Then the music changed and the accordians burst into wild dance music. Out marched the Ukrainian boys and girls. They danced arm in arm. They stepped in circles. It was beautiful. But the best part was when Olga danced the Hutzullochka alone. Olga's long colored ribbons swirled out behind her as she turned and whirled and stamped her red boots. Johanna held her breath. She forgot to watch Jan.

"Hi!" he yelled. He knew Olga Andrushevsky. He liked Olga Andrushevsky very much. "Hi!" he yelled

and started out across the floor toward her.

"Oh," groaned Johanna. "Jan, Jan, come back," she called softly.

But Jan did not stop. Jan ran as fast as he could, clop, clop, with Johanna after him, clop, clop, clop. Then Johanna slipped on the slippery floor and fell down.

"Jan," called his mother, but Jan did not stop.

"I get him," said the Chippewa chief. "I get him for you."

His big feather headdress flapped up and down as he ran. The musicians were laughing so hard that they made squeaky shrieks on their horns. Olga was laughing so hard that she could hardly keep up with her red boots.

Clop, clop, clop, went Jan's wooden shoes. The big chief's moccasins made no sound at all. He tried to make Indian sign

language at Jan. But Jan rushed up to Olga and threw his fat Dutch arms around Olga's Ukrainian skirts.

"Hi!" he yelled. He liked Olga Andrushevsky!

Olga stopped dancing. She bent over and hugged Jan. The music stopped with a loud shriek. All the people of the festival clapped and cheered and the people in the theater seats clapped too and stamped and shouted.

Then the Chippewa chief grunted and picked Jan up in his arms.

"You come back to your mamma," he said.

The music began again and Olga went on dancing the Hotzullochka. Johanna hardly saw the rest of Olga's dance. She did not see at all the dances that followed. She was so unhappy. She had spoiled the dance of her best friend. When the

program was over, she sat on the bench kicking her wooden shoes against each other. Her head was hanging and her face was very pink.

"Where is Jan?" cried Olga, as she and Bonnie ran up.

"Oh, Mother took him home. The chief gave him a little drum to keep him quiet. Wasn't he awful!"

"He was cute," said Olga.

"But he spoiled your dance. I was so ashamed!" said Johanna. "He made such a noise."

"Oh, he was cute," said Bonnie.

"He didn't spoil the dance," Olga said. "Everybody liked him."

"Didn't they clap and clap?" asked Bonnie.

"I'd like him for my brother," said Olga. "He's darling!"

"Well, you may have him any day you

want him," Johanna said. "Take him. Do take him! I'll give you all the money in my bank, if you'll just take him!"

"Come on, let's get some chocolate milk," said Bonnie.

"And some popcorn," said Olga.

They might cheer poor Johanna up, they thought. So they went around the square together arm in arm.

"Wasn't that the cutest Dutch boy?" some one said at the right of them.

"I never saw such a cute thing as that little Dutch boy," said some one else on the left.

"I'd like to hug that runaway Dutch thing," said some one behind them. "Wasn't he too darling! The best thing in the show."

"There, see?" said Olga Andrushevsky.

"See?" said Bonnie McCrindle.

“Everybody liked him. He didn’t spoil anything.”

“Well, all right,” said Johanna Van der Bakker. She was smiling again. “All right. I won’t give him away. I’ll keep him.”

And on around the village square toward the Dutch milk cart the three friends walked. Past the Finnish booth and past the Roumanian and the Austrian and the Japanese and the Mexican booths. Along they went, arm in arm, around the holiday fair, click, click, sh, sh, and clop, clop, clop!



Champions

“ALL right,” Smiley said, and took out his fat silver watch with the second hand. “Let’s see how good you boys are today.”

Benj crouched down by the block of granite. His hands were sore and full of new calluses. But he forgot about them when he gripped the drill, the shortest one, and held it over the stone. Maybe today he and Ed could break their record. Maybe when the time was up, there would be a six-inch hole drilled into the hard

gray rock. And maybe, for once, Smiley would say something better than "Not bad, not bad."

Benj knew how lucky they were to have Ed's big brother, Smiley, train them for the contest. He was the champion rock-driller of the district. No one in High Ridge, or Goldtown, or Freedom, or Sunrise, or any of the other mining camps around, could touch Smiley! He could strike seventy blows a minute with a heavy miner's hammer. And he was a sure hand at the drill, too.

"Remember what I told you, Benj," Smiley was saying. "Hold your drill straight. And keep it turning, turning, to make a good round hole. If you get a three-sided hole at that contest on the Fourth, you're done for." Smiley ought to know. He'd been champion for four years, since 1896.

Benj nodded. He knew how hard it was to round out a hole after it began to get lopsided. And how much precious time it took.

He saw Smiley stoop down to adjust the little hose that carried a trickle of water from the water barrel to the granite block. As soon as they started drilling, they'd need that water to keep washing the granite dust out of the hole.

"And you, Ed." Smiley turned to his brother. "Keep your eye on the drill head. Make like you see a bright silver spot plumb in the middle of the head. And aim for that. Don't go hitting to one side."

Out of the corner of his eye Benj could see Ed waiting to strike the first blow on the drill with the long-handled hammer. Benj, holding the iron drill steady, was not afraid of getting his knuckles smashed.



He was good, Ed was. Or as Smiley would say, "Not bad for a kid." He had a good eye.

"Just a couple more seconds," Smiley warned. "Ready . . . GO!"

Clang . . . clang. Ed's hammer began to come down fast and steady.

Benj kept the drill straight under the hammer blows. And kept it turning, turning. After all, didn't Smiley say, "As much depends on the drill-turner as on the hammer man."

Clang . . . turn. Clang . . . turn. The "bit," the sharp flattened edge at the end of the drill, ground down into the granite.

Benj began to wonder if he could change drills fast enough to please Smiley when the time came for a longer and sharper one. The drills were all lined up there on the ground. But could he pull one out and slip another in, the way Smiley

could, without missing a hammer stroke?

Clang . . . turn. Clang . . . turn.

“One minute . . . hup!” Smiley called out.

At that signal Benj and Ed changed places, just as the men did in their rock-drilling contests. Hup! The boys did their best to make the shift smoothly. They had practiced it over and over again. But still they couldn't shift like Smiley.

Now Benj at the hammer and Ed at the drill. Clang . . . turn. Clang . . . turn. When Smiley finally called time, Benj was hot and wet and dirty. He shook the water from his face and hair. Some of it was sweat, some of it dirty water that splashed out of the drill hole each time the hammer struck.

He shivered slightly. All of a sudden the light breeze of the mountain evening pressed like cold hands against him. He

saw the sun poised behind Twin Peaks, ready to slide down.

"I'll get the measurement," Smiley said, taking out his steel tape. "Then you kids run along and dry off. You've had quite a workout."

He stooped over the new hole in the much-bored block of practice granite. "Not bad. Not bad. Pretty close to six inches. About a quarter inch better than your record. Not bad! Keep it up and you'll beat that red-head they're talking about over at Freedom. I hear he's pretty good."

Benj couldn't help wondering how good.

Flushed and excited, he ran down the dusty street of the mining camp. They had beaten their seven-minute record! Of course, it wasn't much compared to the

hole Smiley and his partner could drill. They could drive a straight round hole thirty inches deep into a block of granite in fifteen minutes. But it wasn't bad for beginners. Even Smiley said so.

Ten silver dollars seemed to roll ahead of Benj as he ran toward the unpainted house next to the livery stable. Ten silver dollars. That was the first prize in the boys' rock-drilling contest on the Fourth of July. It was as much as Smiley could earn working at the mine four whole days, ten hours a day.

Benj and Ed already had a list two pages long of the things they wanted to buy with that ten dollars.

Of course, they would enter the 50-yard dash too. And the sack race. And the potato race. But the first prize for those was only a dollar. It was worth practicing

hard to come out on top in the boys' rock-drilling contest. It was worth all the calluses and blisters.

Benj was hot again by the time he reached home. Hot and full of hope. They still had four days to practice. If they kept on breaking their record . . .

He hurried through the open door into a room filled with the lavender half-light of dusk. Millie, playing with her black-headed doll, gave him one look and called out: "Ma. Benjy's been drilling again. He's all dirty."

Mrs. Lansdown came out of the kitchen. "Well," she said. "Chief Spotted Rain-in-the-Face! Come along and wash off your war paint. Land sakes, I don't see why you can't get excited over some nice clean business—like running a livery stable. Like your father."

Benj grinned. "But, Ma, just think ten dollars . . ."

"Ten dollars, indeed. I'll believe it when I see it, Big Chief Spots and Spatters."

At last the Fourth came, the day of the big celebration at Freedom. Benj was up soon after sunrise, too excited to sleep. He ran up the street to Morgan's, to whistle for Ed. But their log house looked as still and sleepy as the pine tree next to the hitching post.

"I don't see how people can sleep so late on the Fourth of July," Benj thought as he walked back home. It was all of five o'clock!

His father was up, shaving in front of the mirror in the kitchen where the wash basin stood.

"Big day, Benj," he said. "I'll be needing your help this morning." He daubed at the frothy lather in his shaving cup. "So many orders for horses and rigs I don't see how we can get over to Freedom ourselves. Big day for a livery stable."

Benj wet his lips. But he couldn't say anything. Stay home and help at the stable! And let Ed and Smiley and the rest of the Morgans drive over to Freedom without him? They were planning to leave early, right after breakfast, so they'd be there in plenty of time. The boys' rock-drilling contest was the first thing on the program. At 9 o'clock.

"But Pa . . ." Benj finally managed to say. "I'm in the contest."

"What contest?"

"Rock-drilling. I told you. I've been practicing."

"What do you know about rock drilling? Time enough when you grow up and can be in the men's contest. They'll still be having them every Fourth of July."

"Smiley's been training us, Ed and me," Benj said, trying to make the words sound natural. But they didn't. He turned to run out of the room, and bumped right into his mother. "Oh, Ma." He clung to her. "Oh, Ma . . ."

In the end his mother fixed it. She didn't think much of rock-drilling contests. "Get all tired and dirty, and what for?" But she thought a lot of Benj.

"If you'll take Millie with you, Sitting Bull," she said, "and keep an eagle eye on her, I'll help your father at the stable. Like as not we won't get to Freedom till the tag end of the morning. Good luck to you . . . and don't you be too disappointed if you don't win the ten dollars."

Freedom camp was decorated "fit to kill," so Smiley said. The false fronts of the stores along Main Street were all fancied up with red, white, and blue bunting and flags. And the speaker's stand in front of the post office was so grand Benj had to look twice to find the rough pine framing underneath.

Long before the program was ready to start, the town began to fill up with wagons and rigs coming in from all directions over the hills. It was a bright, golden morning, with a dancing blue sky overhead. And no one minded that the sun was hot and the roads thick with dust.

What a hubbub in the mining camp! Benj had never seen anything quite like it. Noise of firecrackers. Creak of wagon wheels. Yells of drivers. Boots clumping on the board walks. Excited talk and shouting. And, as Smiley pointed out,

"everyone in his best bib and tucker."

While Smiley took care of the horses, Benj and Ed and Millie walked down the street to look at the store windows. Benj had to hold on to Millie's hand, had to keep pulling her along. But for once he didn't mind. This was going to be the best Fourth of July in Colorado. Hanging on to Millie was a hundred times better than having to stay home and miss it.

"There's going to be ice cream and pink lemonade this noon," Ed said in an awed voice as they passed the Palace Hotel. "Free."

Mrs. Morgan promised to look after Millie while the boys' drilling contest was on. And so as nine o'clock drew near Benj had nothing on his mind except winning that ten dollars.

He and Ed stood near the platform at

the end of the street where the contest was to take place. Two squared blocks of granite stuck up through the platform floor—one for the men's contest, one for the boys'.

"Wonder which one is Red," Benj kept saying, as a crowd began to gather.

"That one, I bet." Ed pulled his arm. "Over there."

A sturdy red-headed boy carrying a set of drills was walking up with a dark-haired boy carrying a hammer. They didn't look nervous or scared . . . the way Benj was sure he and Ed looked.

Because it was a new event on the program, only six teams were entered in the boys' contest. Benj expected there would be more. But he was glad there weren't. This way it wouldn't take so long to decide the winner.

Smiley came up with the drills and

hammer, and an extra hammer in case the handle broke. "Now remember all the things I told you," he said. "You can forget 'm this afternoon, but remember 'm this morning."

When they drew lots for places in the contest, Benj and Ed got third. Red and his partner drew sixth. Benj was disappointed. He wished they could change places. It would spur them on to know what Red's record was beforehand.

"Well, may the best team win," Smiley called out loudly just before the contest started. "May the best team win." Everyone clapped and shouted for Smiley, the champion rock-driller of the district.

"All right, all right, now stand back," one of the judges said to the crowd, as the first team took its place on the platform. "When the boys change drills, they throw the old ones out, you know. The way

they throw bats in a ball game. So stand back, stand back. It won't feel so good to get hit by a drill."

The contest was on.

The first team made the mistake of starting too fast, and then having to break its rhythm by slowing down. One of the boys, though good at the drill, was weak on the hammer. "We won't have to worry about them," Benj whispered to Ed, long before the seven minutes were up.

The second team was better at the start. But before they were halfway through, their hole began to get lopsided. Benj saw they were having trouble turning the drill. Finally it stuck, and the boys gave up before time was called.

Benj's hands were clammy wet now their turn had come. He rubbed them in the dirt. He had to keep a firm grip on that drill! Now was the time to show Smiley

how good they were. If they won, he'd have to say it. He'd have to say they were good.

Clang . . . clang. Ed's hammer came down in the old familiar way. Benj tried to forget about the contest, the platform, the people standing around watching. "We're just out in Morgan's back yard practicing," he told himself.

Clang . . . turn. Clang . . . turn. They made their shifts better than they ever had before, at each signal to change places. Inch by inch the bit ground into the granite.

At last time was called. The crowd clapped and shouted. Benj, dripping and hot, felt sure they had beaten their record again.

When the judge called out the number of inches they had drilled, the boys of the fourth team looked at each other with a

silly grin. Then they shrugged, and gave up without even trying.

The fifth team tried hard enough, but fell short of the third team's record by almost an inch.

And then came Red's turn! He started at the hammer, with the dark-haired boy at the drill. Benj and Ed, standing with towels around their shoulders, watched tensely. How good was he?

It didn't take them long to find out. Red swung the hammer quickly and firmly, square on the head of the drill, as if he had done it all his life. And when he changed to the drill he turned it like an expert.

"That boy's got a feeling for rock drilling," Benj heard Smiley say. "I'd better watch out, three or four years from now."

As the minutes passed, Benj knew that

the two boys working over the block of granite were champions. He seemed to see the ten dollars slipping away . . . slipping away from team three right into the pockets of team six.

Benj glanced at Ed and saw by the look on his face that he knew too.

Five minutes passed. Then six. The last lap! Benj watched Red and his partner work on like veterans, not letting up for a second. And then it happened . . .

Red was at the drill. Suddenly he pulled it out with a queer gesture. He did not throw it aside and grab a sharper one. He just looked at it dumbly. His partner stopped swinging the hammer and looked too. Then the two judges climbed up on the platform.

"I bet the bit broke," Smiley muttered. "Tough luck."

For a moment Benj felt a warmth of glee

flood over him. Now he and Ed would win, after all! With almost a minute to go, team six couldn't possibly meet their seven-minute record.

Then Benj saw that Smiley wasn't smiling. He was sorry it happened! Benj felt his own excitement fade away, like sun going under a cloud.

"Tough luck," Smiley said again. "Mighty tough."

"Ladies and gentlemen," the judge called out. "An unfortunate thing happened. The bit end of the drill broke. It's down in the hole. The boys can't drill on top of the broken piece, and it's too late for them to start a new hole."

"Time!" the other judge called, looking at his watch.

The judges worked over the hole, and finally got out the broken bit. Then they took the measurement.

“In just a little over six minutes,” one of the judges announced, “these two boys came within an eighth of an inch of meeting the record made by team three in seven minutes.”

The crowd cheered. Benj felt guilty. He turned to Ed and spoke close to his ear in order to be heard above the applause. “They didn’t have Smiley to check their drills for them, like us. They’re better than we are, Ed.”

Ed nodded.

“Smiley said, ‘May the best team win.’ ”

Ed nodded again. And Benj knew that he and Ed felt the same way.

“Because of this unfortunate accident,” the judge went on, “the ten dollar prize goes to team three. To Benjamin Lansdown and Edwin Morgan, of High Ridge. Will you boys step up here, please?”

Benj and Ed went slowly up to the platform. They never thought they'd feel like this winning ten dollars!

Then facing the judges and speaking in a wavering voice that only Smiley and a few others at the front of the crowd could hear, Benj said: "It wasn't their fault. They did better than we did. The prize belongs to them."

Ed nodded.

When the judge repeated what Benj had said, there was more yelling and clapping than ever before. Smiley rushed up and slapped Benj and Ed on the back. "Say, you're good," he said. "There's more than one kind of champ. You're good."

That, from Smiley, made the ten dollars look like a handful of pennies.

Just then a voice boomed out from the crowd. "Look here," a husky miner

shouted. "There's no reason why those boys shouldn't have a prize too. I'm passing the hat. Chip in, folks!"

Benj looked at Ed, and Ed looked at Benj. They were thinking the same thing again. They were thinking that it wasn't the best Fourth of July in Colorado—it was the best in the whole United States.



The Missing E

TIM'S Aunt Susan and Uncle Dan had moved to New Hampshire and Tim was glad. He had driven up from Boston with his parents for many good times with his aunt and uncle and any day the postman might bring a letter asking him up again. There had been Thanksgiving, with its crispy cold weather and the table laden with good things to eat. Then there had been Christmas, with snow in the fields, and Tim had been able to use his new sled. Tim had just begun to think it

had been a long time since he had been to the country when a letter came from Aunt Susan.

“The last Monday in April is Fast Day in New Hampshire and it’s a holiday,” the letter said. “Wouldn’t it be nice if you could all come up and celebrate it with us?”

Well, Tim thought, Aunt Susan certainly has forgotten how to spell. She must have left the E out of Feast Day, for whoever would think of celebrating a Fast Day?

Tim asked his mother what kind of day it might be in New Hampshire. His mother said that she supposed it was a kind of Thanksgiving Day.

“But you’ll have to find out and tell us about it, Tim,” she said. “The last Monday in April isn’t a holiday in Massachusetts whatever it may be in New

Hampshire. Daddy and I can't possibly get away."

Tim felt very happy riding up all alone on the bus. When he got to the little town where Aunt Susan lived he felt even happier when he saw her waiting for him. But the streets of the town looked empty and there were signs in the store windows saying

CLOSED TODAY LEGAL HOLIDAY

"Where is everyone?" Tim asked.

"Away, celebrating the day," Aunt Susan answered.

Tim was going to ask what kind of a holiday it was when they reached the red farmhouse. But for a few minutes there was so much to see and do that he quite forgot his question.

Tim felt puzzled when they went into the house for it wasn't a bit like arriving on Thanksgiving Day. Then the house

had been full of the smells of good things cooking. The table in the dining room had been loaded with the good things they were soon going to eat. But today the house was quiet and full of sunshine, and in the kitchen there was no sign of food except the sandwiches Aunt Susan had made for their picnic and the bottle of milk they were taking.

"I thought we'd go to the woods for our celebration," Aunt Susan was saying, "there's so much happening there. Uncle Dan wants to get his garden ready for planting and we have the day to ourselves to do with as we like."

They went a little way into the woods and sat on a big fallen log in a clearing. But it was not like any day. It was like a kind of first day for nature. It was as if a door had been opened and everything had come tumbling out to be part of the world

again. Birds that had newly arrived from the South were singing gaily, and flowers were appearing where Aunt Susan said there had been not a sign of any a few days before. The sun was bright and warm about them. There were fat buds on the trees. The snow had all gone, but there were pools of water in the places where it had lain deep.

Birds were fluttering around in the trees. Aunt Susan kept telling Tim about the different ones they saw—robins and song sparrows, and now and then the flash of a bluebird's wings. A rabbit hopped across the moss in long easy jumps as if, now that the cold and snow had gone, he didn't have to hurry any more. Tim spied some trillium growing tall and gay. Near to them was a cluster of bell flowers waving in the warm spring wind. There was so much to see that he almost forgot how

hungry he was, but he remembered it soon enough when Aunt Susan took the sandwiches and milk out of the basket.

"Look, Tim," she whispered, pointing across the clearing.

They both watched a woodchuck come slowly out of his burrow, sniff the air, then amble off toward the meadow and the hope of green grass.

"He's hungry," Aunt Susan said.

"I hope his dinner tastes as good as ours does," Tim commented.

"I'm glad you like our Fast Day picnic. There isn't very much to it but that's as it should be."

"Fast Day!" Tim exclaimed, for he'd almost forgotten. "What is it anyway?"

"Why, today, the day I asked you to come up to New Hampshire for," Aunt Susan said. And then she told Tim the story of Fast Day.

“In the early times in New England, people used to keep two special occasions every year—a day of fasting near the beginning of the year, and a day of feasting at the end of the year. After the Revolution most of the states forgot about Fast Day, but Thanksgiving Day gradually became a national holiday. Some of the other states—your own Massachusetts, Tim, and Maine too—once had laws which directed their governors to proclaim a day of prayer and fasting in spring. But they’ve all repealed those laws . . .”

“What’s that?”

“Recalled them so they aren’t laws anymore and don’t have to be obeyed. But New Hampshire still keeps its Fast Day, the last Monday in April. Observance of it has been made a law by the State Legislature. The governor makes a



proclamation about it every year just as he does for Thanksgiving.”

“It’s like Thanksgiving only it’s different, isn’t it?” Tim asked.

Aunt Susan nodded, “Yes it is, Tim, in a way. On Thanksgiving we think gratefully about the harvests we’ve had. We spread our tables with good things and call in others to share them with us. But on Fast Day we do something different. We don’t think about food and we just have what is handy. We enjoy the day and the new spring world, and in our hearts we’re grateful for all the goodness at the time of planting.”

Tim and Aunt Susan went for a long walk far back into the woods. They found all sorts of exciting things—animal tracks and fern fiddles and enough wild flowers for Tim to make a big bunch to take home to his mother. When they got back to the

red farmhouse the birds had begun to sing sleepily in the trees. The peepers were calling in the marshes, and the big puddles where snow had lain were reflecting the sunset.

Uncle Dan was sitting on the back steps looking over the spaded earth in his garden and the neat rows where he had already planted peas.

"How do you like Fast Day, Tim?" he asked.

"I like it," Tim said.

"It's a nice day," Uncle Dan went on, "the kind of day you keep all free and open just to enjoy whatever comes along."

Tim wanted to tell Aunt Susan that when he first read her letter he thought she had spelled "feast" wrong, but when he heard Uncle Dan say it was a day to enjoy he decided that the missing E was in that little word ENJOY.

“It’s really a sort of feast day, too,” Tim thought to himself as the bus rolled over the road to Boston and he saw other people picnicking or walking, raking leaves or planting their gardens, just enjoying each other and the day.



Fireworks for the Fourth

JACK and Freddie Williams were inventing again. They had decided to take their sister Patty to the Fourth of July parade in a dog cart. Not even the Fourth of July, it seemed, could keep the Williams brothers from inventing.

"I don't know why we never thought of this before." Jack scratched the freckles on his nose. "It's a swell idea."

"It will be a lot easier than for us to pull the cart all the time." Freddie bent over the cart handle and turned his screw driver

round and round. The screws began to move.

Patty was just too young so she couldn't help much. She sat in her red cart and watched, while a big brown-and-white collie ran back and forth and barked. Rob, the Williams' dog, was always excited when Jack and Freddie invented things.

Suddenly the handle flew off the cart and Freddie nearly fell on his face.

"I've got it off," he shouted. "What do we do now?"

"Make the harness," Jack answered. "Here's some pieces of rope for it." Jack was a year older, so he usually did most of the bossing while Freddie did the work. Freddie was better at making things, anyhow.

It was a real job to put the harness together because Rob wouldn't stand still. He wagged his tail, licked Freddie's face,

and pawed the dirt with his feet. And just when Freddie thought that all the ropes were in place, Rob turned around and tangled everything.

"You'll have to hold him," Freddie told Jack, "or I'll never get this fixed." So while Jack held Rob, Freddie started again from the beginning.

When the harness was finally finished and Rob was hitched to the wagon, Patty took charge.

"Giddyup," she shouted. "Giddyup, Robbie."

However, Rob wasn't used to playing horse. He sniffed his harness, looked back at the red cart, and then lay down in a tangle of rope. His tail thumped the ground and his mouth looked for all the world as if he were laughing.

"Oh, you bad doggie," Patty wailed. "We won't ever get to the parade."

The parade was especially important to all the Williams children because their father and mother were going to be in it. They were to be dressed like George and Martha Washington and ride on the back of a big truck.

"Come on, Robbie. Get up." Jack and Freddie tugged at the big collie. After a long time they pulled him to his feet, but they still couldn't make him pull the cart.

All at once there was a sound of band music in the distance.

"It's the parade," Patty shouted. Before anyone could help her, she scrambled out of the cart and started off on the run. Rob trotted right along beside her, pulling the cart behind him.

Jack and Freddie stared in amazement.

"He's pulling it," Freddie cried. "Come on."

At the top of the hill Patty stopped and waited for her brothers to catch up. Already the band music sounded closer.

"Can I ride down the hill to Main Street?" she asked.

"Sure," answered Jack. "Get in."

They were all ready to start out again when a door slammed and an orange-headed boy came out of the house on the corner. He was holding something in one hand which interested him so much that he didn't even notice Rob's harness and the cart.

"Hey, Freddie," he yelled. "Guess what I've got."

"How should I know?" Freddie answered. "Let's see."

The boy held out his hand, uncovering a long red thing with a white string in one end.

"A firecracker!" both the Williams boys exclaimed at once.

"My brother Bert gave it to me," Jimmy bragged. "Want to watch me shoot it?"

"But we aren't supposed to shoot firecrackers," Freddie said. "Dad says they're dangerous. He says we might hurt ourselves with them."

"Well, I'm not afraid," Jimmy told him. "Bert told me how to light it." He set the firecracker down on the sidewalk and got a match out of his pocket. Jack walked up closer so he could get a better view. Even Freddie couldn't help being interested.

Rob and Patty, though, were still looking down the hill in the direction of the band music. All the time it was growing louder and louder. Every once in a while Rob's ears twitched. He wasn't

quite certain that he liked band music.

Jim scratched his match on the pavement. A weak flame flickered at one end.

"Are you really going to light it?" Jack whispered.

"Sure. Don't you think I dare?"

"Dad promised he'd take us to Hartfield to see the fireworks tonight if we didn't shoot any firecrackers," Freddie said.

"Well, you're not shooting this one," Jim argued. And his hand drew closer and closer to the firecracker. The boys stopped breathing for an instant when they saw the match touch the thin white string. As the string burst into flame, they drew back and waited for the loud blast.

Then, suddenly—BANG! And all three of them jumped into the air. Rob let out a regular roar of a bark and started

down the hill as fast as he could tear, dragging the cart and Patty behind him.

"Hey! Stop him!" Freddie shouted. "He'll tip the cart over."

The boys raced down the hill, with Freddie in the lead, but Rob was way ahead of them. The cart rocked dangerously back and forth as it went over the bumpy sidewalk. Patty's yellow curls flew this way and that as she tipped from one side to the other. Her little fists clutched the edges of the cart. She was too frightened to utter a sound.

Down at the foot of the hill, old Mr. Harris suddenly darted out from his side porch, yelling: "Whoa. Whoa." But his attempt to help did more harm than good. Rob skidded down the bank into the road and Freddie couldn't help closing his eyes for an instant when he saw the cart tip almost onto its side. When he opened



them again, the cart was back on four wheels and Patty was still clutching at the sides.

Now that he was on level ground, Rob had to slow down a little. Patty and the cart were heavier to pull. Freddie began to think that he might catch up to the runaway dog. Then, for the first time, he saw the Fourth of July parade marching straight up Main Street. Rob would never get across the road ahead of it.

Rob never tried to cross the road. Just as he started the buglers blew a call. The noise frightened him so that he turned left and started down alongside the columns of marching men and decorated trucks. He was too scared to know where he was going.

Two figures in white powdered wigs and old-fashioned clothes stood posed on the back of one of the trucks. One of

them—a man who looked like George Washington—spied the dog and cart and shouted: “Patty! Rob!” Then, powdered wig, satin breeches, and all, he jumped off the truck. Shoving himself between the runaway dog and the parade, he cried: “Rob! Stop!”

Almost immediately Rob stopped. As far back as anyone could remember he had always done what Mr. Williams told him.

By this time the parade had stopped too. And a lady in a white wig and hoop skirt had jumped off the truck. “Patty, are you all right?” she cried, as she lifted the little girl up into her arms.

“Mummy!” Patty shouted as she threw her arms around her mother’s neck.

A crowd quickly gathered around the little group. Jack, Freddie, and Jimmy were already right in the center of it.

“I told you boys you were not to play

with fireworks," Mr. Williams scolded, after he had heard the whole story. "That's why I promised to take you to Hartfield tonight."

"It wasn't Jack's and Freddie's fault, Mr. Williams," Jimmy spoke up. "I did it. It was my firecracker."

"It's Bert's fault if it's anybody's," said Jimmy's father. (He had been Benjamin Franklin on one of the other trucks.) "Bert is old enough to know better and I shall see that he is punished."

"Well . . . even so," said Mr. Williams. "Freddie and Jack should have known better than to hitch poor Rob to the cart. Both he and Patty might have been badly hurt. If you boys don't stop inventing such things, you are going to kill somebody."

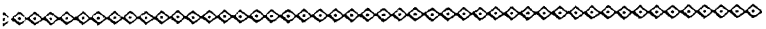
"Well, Fred," said Jimmy's father, "without that American spirit of adventure

we wouldn't be celebrating Independence Day."

Mr. Williams grinned. "Does that mean that they shouldn't be punished? Just because it's the Fourth of July?"

"If we can go to the fireworks tonight," Jack promised, "we'll never, ever invent another thing."

Mr. Williams laughed. "I just wish I could believe that," he said. "But right now," he added, as he looked around, "I think we'd better get on with the parade."



Maisette, Be Merry

MARDI GRAS had come at last!

Ever since Christmas, Maisette had been counting the days until this Tuesday in late February when the whole city would masquerade all day long. For weeks, New Orleans had been decorated in carnival colors, purple, green and gold. Lights blazed on Canal Street, turning night into day. Maisette had helped twist purple, green and gold streamers around the iron railing on the balcony of her own house on Royal Street. Even the patio walls were

draped with streamers. It looked very gay indeed.

Maisette had watched parades each night from her balcony—clapping her hands and waving at the dancing maskers on floats.

“Throw me something, mister,” she cried, and one night a masker had thrown her a string of blue beads.

For days the newspapers had been full of stories about Rex, King of Carnival, the Lord of Misrule for this one wonderful day. All of Maisette’s friends talked about Rex—Rex and his Queen. “He will be dressed in white satin. His mantle will be cloth of gold, embroidered with jewels and trimmed with ermine,” they said. “His silk stockings have been especially woven for him, and his satin slippers are stitched in gold. His crown will be the most wonderful shining crown that ever

was seen," they said. And Maisette had listened.

She had dreamed of seeing this King and she had dreamed that this King might even see her, though she knew that was impossible. He could not see her—one little girl among so many people. Thousands of strangers had come from near and far to masquerade on Mardi Gras Day.

"From early morning until midnight Rex will rule the city," said Maisette's father and mother. "There will be more maskers than ever before. There will be nothing but merry-making the whole day long."

Maisette woke up very early that Tuesday morning.

"Praise the saints," she said, "the sun will shine on Rex. It will be a perfect day."

Jumping out of bed, she opened her armoire door and took out her costume, a bright red suit with a long tail attached to it. It was the prettiest, shiniest red devil's suit she had ever seen. Even her red ballet slippers had new ribbons to tie around her ankles. On her dark hair she put a tight little red cap from which stuck out two red horns. Then she put on her mask—a whole false face.

Looking in the long mirror she said to herself, "What a beautiful tail! And what a face! Even Mama won't know who I am."

She ran down the steps to the patio, then into the kitchen, where Celine was fixing breakfast, singing:

"Mardi Gras
Tickle de pas
Hop behind the street car."

"*Mon Dieu*, have mercy," said Celine.

“Who dis devil? Go 'way! Go 'way!”

Maisette grabbed Celine's hands, dancing and prancing. “I'm a devil, I'm a devil—Oh Mardi Gras, tickle de pas, hop behind the street car.” Then laughing she snatched off her mask.

“So! It's you!” said Celine with a broad grin. “I wonder what little devil come in my kitchen so early dis morning. Now you be quiet. Yo' mama and papa out late at the ball last night and they not awake yet. Dey gonna sit on the balcony wid the Queen dis day. They gotta be fresh.”

“I know, I know, I know,” said Maisette. “I wish I was the Queen then I could look at Rex all day long.”

“You talk about being Queen already and you only nine years old,” Celine said. “Imagine Rex having a little ol' red devil for a Queen—” and she hugged her sides, rocking back and forth laughing.

“Ya-a-a! I’m a devil. I’m going out on the banquette to see the other Mardi Gras!”

“You come back soon, now. Breakfast most ready,” Celine called.

Maisette ran down the alleyway and pushed open the big iron gate. It was still early but already men with trays of badges and walking canes with purple, green and gold pompons tied to them and small red and white whips to sell, were walking to Canal Street. Small maskers were running around in the street.

“Mardi Gras! Mardi Gras!” they called to each other.

Maisette joined them. One was a clown—and the other, a boy in rags, whose face was painted with black cork. Across the street a group of wild Indians were dancing and yelling. No one could tell who any one really was. Three grown-up

people came around the corner—playing cards were sewed all over their loose gowns. They wore false faces and wigs. The only way to know they were men was by their shoes. Quickly the Indians, the devil, the ragamuffin and the clown joined hands and made a dancing circle around them, singing “Mardi Gras, tickle de pas, hop behind the street car.”

The playing card-men danced a few steps and pulled the devil’s tail before they broke the circle and went on.

Then Celine was at the gate calling—“Maisette, come in to breakfast.” And Maisette ran back home.

At breakfast Papa read the morning paper out loud— “Rex, the King of Carnival, the Lord of Misrule, and his parade are due to reach Canal Street at 11:30 this morning. As is his custom, he

will stop at the Balcony of the Boston Club to drink a toast to his Queen. . . .”

“Let me see his picture,” said Maisette looking over Papa’s shoulder. The black-and-white picture showed Rex standing on a platform, his mantle draped down the steps. In one hand he held a jeweled scepter, in the other a lace-trimmed handkerchief.

“That’s a poor picture,” said Papa.

“I think he’s beautiful,” said Maisette. “Oh Papa! Oh Mama! I hope I see the King today.”

Just then they heard a loud horn tooting outside.

“Your little friends have come for you, dear,” said Mama. “Put on your mask.”

All three went outside where the truck was blowing for Maisette. It was a very fancy truck indeed. Purple, green and

gold paper was twisted in the spokes of the wheels. The sides of the truck were draped in purple, green and gold cotton bunting. Little red devils seemed to be popping out all over it. They all called out to Maisette at the same time:

“Hurry up!”

“We’ve seen two parades already!”

“There are millions of maskers!”

“Come on. Hurry!!”

Papa picked up Maisette and put her on the truck.

“Good-by! Good-by!” they all shouted as the truck started off.

The red devils were all her friends but at first Maisette could not tell which one was who. All were dressed alike, red suit with red tail, red cap with red horns and red false face.

As they rode across Canal Street Maisette felt they could never get back again, there

were so many people crowded together there.

"But I must get back," she thought. "I must see Rex on Canal Street."

The truck went slowly up St. Charles Avenue. Maskers paraded everywhere. Many groups were dressed alike. Each had a band, and each band was tootling as loud as it could. Other trucks loaded with other maskers appeared. Thousands of people were waiting for Rex and his parade. Some had brought campstools and were sitting comfortably. Others sat on the curbs and many were standing. Men with trays were walking up and down selling popcorn, peanuts and cotton candy. Every moment the crowds grew thicker.

The little devils danced on the truck and yelled at other Mardi Gras. At one corner the truck stopped to let a procession of maskers walk by. They were all dressed

like babies and they were whirling around and strutting to the music.

“Let’s jump off the truck, Maisette, and dance in the street,” said Johnny.

“Come on,” answered Maisette.

And two more of the devils jumped too.

Clowns from a truck near them jumped down and joined them. A small masker dressed like a skeleton stood quietly by. Maisette and Johnny saw him and each took him by a hand and jumped up and down while the crowds laughed.

“You’ve got him now, you young devils!” they cried.

“Look out, skeleton—look whose after you!”

Just then the truck started.

“Run,” said Johnny. “Run fast.” And Maisette did.

“Suppose I get left,” thought Maisette.

"I won't see Rex." And she ran faster than ever.

The truck was moving slowly and Maisette and Johnny caught up with it. Two of the larger devils reached down and grabbed Maisette by the hands and pulled her up. Then they pulled up Johnny.

It was almost time for the big parade to start.

"Go to Canal Street," the devils yelled to the driver. "Park the truck and we'll get out," they yelled.

The driver found a place on a side street to park and then he said, "You come back here as soon as the parade is over. I will be here. Don't get lost and stay together."

Then the twelve red devils jumped down and ran. Canal Street was filled with people. Thousands of maskers moved up and down. The sidewalks and

the neutral ground were roped off. Policemen were standing everywhere. The crowds pushed and shoved each other trying to get in front.

“Maisette, let’s go to the neutral ground in the middle of the street,” said Johnny. “Duck under the rope and run.”

They shoved and pushed and wiggled to the ropes. Then they ducked and ran across the street.

“Run, devils, run fast!” yelled the crowd.

Two policemen yelled “Stop” and blew their whistles. Maisette thought surely they would be arrested and go to jail and then she never would see the King. But on the other side of the street the people made an opening for them, then closed in again, and the two were well hidden from the policemen.

There were so many people, Maisette

thought surely she would be smashed. Johnny had disappeared and she couldn't see him. She was shoved and pushed and almost knocked down. She could hardly breathe.

"Parade coming," shouted the crowd.
"Here comes Rex."

Maisette could hear motorcycles spurting by, slowly pushing the crowds back, clearing the entire street. She could hear the beat of the hooves of the horses of the mounted policemen coming nearer. She could hear the music, but she couldn't see a thing. She took off her mask and slipped it on her arm. The crowd cheered and clapped their hands and all but trampled her underfoot. She could not move.

"Rex!" shouted the crowd. Maisette knew that the Carnival King was now stopping to toast his Queen but she could

not see him. In that terrible crowd everything was black. She could not even see the sun. Her mask was torn from her arm and her cap fell off. She could not even stoop to pick it up. Tears of fright and disappointment filled her eyes. A piece of white cloth fell over her face. She could barely raise her arm to move it.

Then suddenly there was a hush. As she stood there listening, the square white cloth clutched in her hand, the crowd stopped shouting and were drawing back away from her. They were making a passageway. Maisette was too frightened to really notice. The tears rolled down her cheeks and she did not even know she still held the piece of white cloth in her hand. Then she heard a muffled voice say:

“And what’s the matter here?”

She looked up and there in front of her stood the most beautiful masker she had ever seen. He wore a large plumed hat, his tunic was purple satin. He wore a short mantle embroidered in gold. Purple silk stockings covered his legs and on his feet were velvet slippers. His face was completely covered with a black silk mask.

This was some one important. The crowd did not push him. They stood and looked at him.

"Rex, the King of Carnival, the Lord of Misrule, forbids tears today. He will be displeased to see you cry," the masker said.

"He can't see me cry," sobbed Maisette. "He can't see me at all. But what's worse is I can't see him." And she put the piece of white cloth up to her face.

"So," said the masker, "you have found the King's handkerchief. You will most

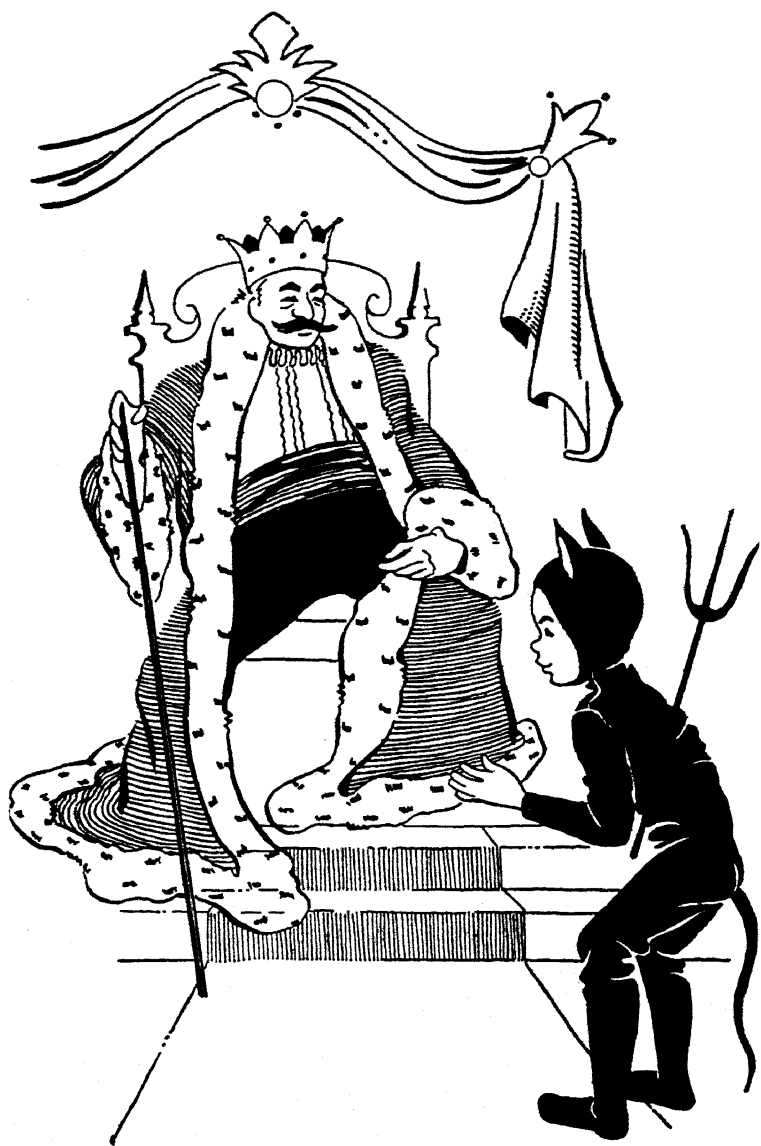
certainly see Rex." And he picked up Maisette and set her on his shoulder.

"I—I have his handkerchief?" she asked breathlessly and then she saw that she held a fine piece of white linen edged in lace. "How did I get it?"

"The wind blew it away while he toasted his Queen," answered the masker.

Then he carried her right through the crowd toward the most beautiful sight she had ever seen.

The throne on which Rex sat was high above the heads of the crowd. It stood on wonderful blue-and-white clouds flecked with gold. Scarlet velvet draped the canopy. The float glittered in the sunshine. And Rex was even more beautiful than anyone had said. His mantle of cloth of gold, embroidered in jewels and edged with ermine, spread out behind him, the length and breadth of the



gigantic float. His crown was a wreath of gold and diamonds and emeralds. His flaxen curls were brighter than sunlight. At his feet stood two page boys dressed in white satin. Even sitting on the masker's shoulder, high above the heads of the crowd, Maisette could just reach a page's hand as he leaned toward her. Rex, the King of Carnival, the Lord of Misrule, turned and bowed low to her. He pointed his glittering scepter at her. She reached out to give the handkerchief to the page. Then she could hear that Rex spoke but she could not understand the words.

The page boy said to her in a loud high voice, "Rex, the King of Carnival, the Lord of Misrule, says you may keep his handkerchief. He says you must be merry all this day long."

"For me!" said Maisette. "Oh, thank you. I will be merry."

But her voice was lost amid the cheers of the crowd.

“Bravo, Rex! Bravo!” they shouted.

The masker put her down on the curb and before she could thank him he had mounted a horse. He rode to the head of the eight hooded horses which drew the float, spoke to a red-robed man and slowly the car moved on as float after float passed by. Maisette worked her way through the crowds back to the truck. In the distance she could see the last swaying car and the music sounded far away.

Finally, the little red devils came running back. They had kept together as the driver had told them to do and Johnny was with them. Breathlessly, they climbed into the truck.

“Did you see the King?” Johnny asked Maisette.

Her eyes shining, her voice very low,

Maisette answered,

“Yes, I saw the King. He spoke to me. He said I could keep the handkerchief. He spoke to me—Rex, the King of Carnival, the Lord of Misrule!”

A Lantern for Liberty

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JOHNNY whistled while he worked. He was building another shelf in the small closet he called his Trophy Room.

He couldn't guess what treasure his father would send him from Indo-China but he knew it would be worth waiting for.

Mr. Warren was a construction engineer who traveled all over the world. Once Johnny asked his father if he had not built enough bridges.

His father answered, "Son, as long as there are people, bridges will be necessary.

We don't always make them of steel and concrete, either, you know. Our government trusts us to build spans of tolerance, friendship and understanding wherever we go. Often, Johnny, when you cross a bridge, you will find the stranger on the other side is a brother."

Dad often talked like that. Sometimes Johnny did not know what his father meant, but he carefully planted the thoughts in the seedbed of his mind. He felt that someday he would grow enough to understand these ideas.

Wherever Mr. Warren went he found something special to send home to Johnny. Already he had a sword from Damascus, a trumpet from Poland, a brace of pistols from Spain, the ivory tusk of an elephant from India, a saddle set with silver from Mexico, and a dagger from Algiers.

Johnny could hear his mother moving

about in the kitchen. Better still, he could smell gingerbread just out of the oven.

Johnny's mother liked boys. She never measured the quantity of cookies and cake they ate, or the quarts of milk they consumed. She did not scold when Johnny brought the whole gang home for band rehearsals. She seemed to know that noise and boys belonged together.

Johnny gave a last blow with the hammer just as the door chimes sounded.

"Johnny!" his mother called.

The gift from Dad must have arrived! Johnny took the stairs four steps at a time.

Mother gave him the cablegram to read.

At first Johnny couldn't believe it. Dad was ill, very ill, and the doctor wanted mother to come by clipper at once.

Ping! Johnny's safe, round, beautiful world burst like a balloon!

He read the words again. There must

be a mistake. There was no mention of him!

"When do we start?" Johnny asked. He felt breathless the way he sometimes did when he had just arrived at the top of the Empire State building.

Mother looked him straight in the eyes. She never believed in covering facts with sugar.

"I'm going to Dad because he needs me," she said. "You are going to your Grandfather's until September."

"But why? I haven't seen Dad for more than a year. And besides, Grandfather is practically a stranger! I'd just die in a little town away off in the country. Oh, I've heard Dad talk about the place where he was born, but it doesn't matter much to me. I bet Lexington, Massachusetts, is so small it isn't even on the map! I won't go! I'll run away!"

"Nonsense!" said his mother, turning away.

She opened a closet and took out Johnny's baseball, his mitt, and a bag of marbles. She acted as if she expected him to enjoy himself somewhere!

"Can't we cable Dad and ask him if . . ."

"Johnny, your father and I agreed the last time he was home, that it was time you learned something about your own country. Your ancestors helped to make history. We want you to know them."

"Huh," said Johnny scornfully. "First time I ever heard of anyone wanting to know dead people."

"Furthermore," said Mother, "Dad and I feel that a boy who has only seen his grandparents twice in his life, is being cheated out of something good that belongs to him."

“Why can’t I wait until later to learn all these things?” And Johnny frowned angrily.

“Jonathan Adams Warren!” said Mother firmly, “if you are half the soldier your father thinks you are you’ll help me by obeying orders—especially when they are given by those who love you! Let me see, now. Today is April seventeenth—you could leave tomorrow. Remember, Jonathan, Dad and I will be lonesome, too.”

Lonesome! Johnny looked down from the plane as it flew like a giant bird toward Boston. Already the skyscrapers of New York were lost in the fog. If Johnny hadn’t been twelve years old he would have cried like a baby.

Rain began to fall, hard and fierce. By the time Johnny reached Logan Airport a

mighty wind rose making it difficult for the plane to come in for a landing. Johnny was not surprised. He felt like a tempest himself.

Grandfather was waiting. He was tall and straight for all his seventy years and his eyes were as blue as the sea. He seemed to shine with gladness.

"This is a happy day for us, Johnny," he said. "Grandmother can hardly wait to see you. It's been a long time since she had a boy in the house to fuss over. Of course, I never cared much for the critters myself." He laughed and gave Johnny a quick hug.

Johnny stiffened. Grandfather need not think he was going to laugh and forget his troubles! No sir! He was going to be so miserable his mother would have to send for him!

"Now, come along, young fellow."

Grandfather gave him a sharp look. "We'll have to run for it."

"Never trust New England weather," said Grandfather as he got behind the wheel of his small truck. "Well, it doesn't matter now, but I sure hope it's fine for Patriots' Day, tomorrow. I don't want you to miss the parade."

Parade! Johnny almost laughed. He had seen parades miles long, colorful as any rainbow. Could Grandfather show him anything new?

"Too bad you came at night," said Grandfather. "I wanted to take you to Faneuil Hall Market."

Market! Johnny had been often to the great Fulton Market by the East River. Food from almost every place in the world was to be found there. Did a market in Boston have something rare?

It did not take them long to reach

Lexington in spite of the wind and rain.

"There's the Green," said Grandfather. "It isn't very large, but we call it holy ground."

That little patch of ground would be lost in Central Park! Was land so precious here?

"That was the statue of Captain Parker, one of the Minute Men. I'll tell you about him tomorrow. Great friend of our family. In fact, Johnny, one of your ancestors died beside him."

"So what?" thought Johnny. He began to think Grandfather was a little queer. He talked in riddles like Dad.

"Here's the jumping off place," said Grandfather.

If Johnny had been listening with his heart as he sometimes did, he might have heard the old house speak to him.

Welcome home, Jonathan. This is the dwelling place of your people. For three hundred years I have been standing here. That hole in the sill was made by a cannon ball. Indian arrow-heads are buried under my windows. In the darkness of my cellar, shadowy figures once hid themselves, for I was a station in the Underground Railroad. In the prayer closet by my great chimney, your ancestors knelt before battle. Listen, Jonathan.

Grandmother was sitting in an old rocking chair braiding a rug. She held out her arms to Johnny.

"The boy is cold, Father," she cried. "His teeth are chattering. Put the kettle on. I'll make some tea."

"I have an idea Johnny thinks tea is only for women," said Grandfather. "He doesn't know that some of his people in Boston once helped to brew a dish of tea so strong that people all over the world are

still talking about it." Grandfather smiled.

At that moment all the lights in the house went out.

"Tarnation!" cried Grandfather from the kitchen. "I bet a tree has fallen on the wires again."

"Calm yourself, John. I'll light some candles," said Grandmother. "Johnny, draw your chair up to the fireplace."

"Where's the flashlight?" shouted Grandfather. "I've got to go down to the barn and you know why."

"There's no battery in it. I told you about it yesterday."

"Never mind. I'll light the lantern," said Grandfather.

He appeared in the doorway.

"Want to come down to the barn with me, Johnny? I need you to hold the lantern."

"You could wait until morning,"

ventured Grandmother. "The child is . . ."

"Fiddlesticks!" said Grandfather. "He won't melt!"

Johnny struggled against the wind and rain toward the big barn that loomed in the darkness. Suddenly he slipped and fell, knocking the lantern out of Grandfather's hand.

Johnny jumped to his feet.

"I hate it here!" he cried. "I'll never stay, do you hear? I don't care if I broke the old lantern, either." He ran toward the dark house.

By the time Grandfather came in Johnny had eaten his supper and was sitting by the fire. He was ashamed to look up.

"Have you added anything new to your Trophy Room, Johnny?" asked Grandfather. He acted as if nothing had happened. Johnny looked up.

"No, Dad hasn't sent me anything from China yet."

"I was just thinking, Johnny. I know some articles you could collect—queer things, maybe, but if you put them all together they'd make a story worth the telling."

"See here, John," said Grandmother. "This boy is too tired and upset to hear any of your lectures. I want him to be able to go to the parade tomorrow."

"Can't go to bed in the dark. You know that, Maria," said Grandfather with a wink toward Johnny. "Besides, it's time the boy knew why we folks here in Massachusetts have Patriots' Day and I mean to tell him."

Grandfather stood with his back to the fire and began to talk.

"You might say, Johnny, a lantern stands for something pretty wonderful. For

hundreds of years in the old world, man walked in darkness, for if there is not liberty, there is no light.

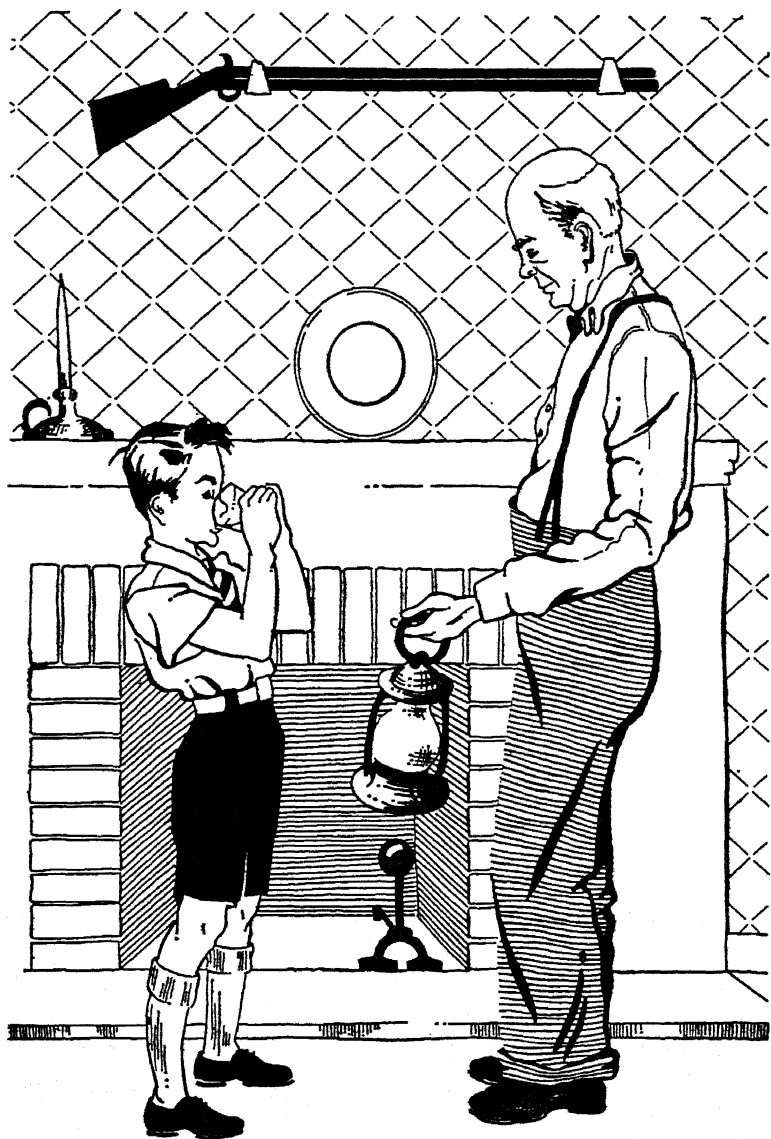
“America was a new land. Here a man might enjoy freedom to speak and think for himself.

“Now, Johnny, we’re going to skip many things tonight until we come to the year 1775. An English king tried to reach across the ocean to rule us. He was not fair in many ways and the people grew angry at his laws.

“They said, ‘Taxation without representation is tyranny.’

“The king sent soldiers to Boston to put down the rebellion. The men determined to fight. They called themselves the ‘Sons of Liberty.’ They met at the Green Dragon Tavern. They met at Faneuil Hall, which some folks still call the Cradle of Liberty.

“The two great leaders, Samuel Adams



and John Hancock, once met in this very room.

“Here in Lexington, and all the little towns around, men began drilling for war. They called themselves the ‘Minute Men.’

“They melted pewter spoons, porringers, and teapots to make their own bullets. They took saltpeter, sulphur and charcoal and ground it to make their own gunpowder.

“One day in April, General Gage received orders from his king to arrest Hancock and Adams and send them to England to be tried for treason. The General thought this would be an easy thing to do.

“He locked up Boston like a trap so no one could get in or out. He planned to capture the two rebels who were known to be here in Lexington. At the same time

he determined to destroy the ammunition he knew the patriots had hidden in this town.

“Now, Johnny, here’s where the lantern comes in. Another great patriot, Paul Revere, had made his plans, too.

“He said he would warn the Minute Men when the British were coming so they might be ready for them.

“A friend was to signal him from the belfry of the Old North Church. One lantern was to be hung if the British were to go by land, two, if by sea.

“About ten o’clock one night Paul Revere and some other patriots, saw two warning lights shine out bright and clear in the dusky steeple.

“There was not a moment to lose. The men glided like shadows down the grass-grown wharf, drew a boat from a hiding

place, and with muffled oars, pushed out upon the dark waters.

“By the light of the rising moon, they could see the black hulks of the British warships as they rowed from Boston to Charlestown.

“A horse was waiting for Revere. He leaped into the saddle. The sparks flew from the iron shoes of the horse as Paul Revere raced through the night toward Lexington, shouting his alarm, ‘Up and arm! Up and arm! The British are coming!’

“He rode that night for liberty, Johnny. He carried the fate of our whole nation with him. He rode for all the men, women and children in the world.

“In the cool of the morning, seven or eight hundred Redcoats came marching in to Lexington to surprise our Minute Men.

“But they were ready—a little group of

farmers—some with the earth from their fields still on their boots, home-made weapons in their hands. They waited on the village green.

“How do you think it went, Johnny, this battle of hundreds against a handful? I guess you know. For every year, on the nineteenth of April, we celebrate Patriots’ Day, and a man dressed as Paul Revere comes riding from Charlestown into Lexington to remind us of what James Otis once said.

“ ‘We give all we have, lives, property, safety, skills . . . we fight, we die, for a simple thing. Only that a man can stand up.’ ”

Johnny looked into the fire. He began to understand. History in books had always seemed nothing but words. Grandfather made everything come alive. He was glad his people had lived here in

those exciting days. He was proud of them.

The lights in the house suddenly came on.

"Sakes alives, it's about time," said Grandmother. She stooped to blow out the lantern.

"Wait," said Johnny. "If you don't mind I'd like to keep it in my room."

"No sense in that," said Grandmother. "This is only an old lantern from the barn. I'll get you the real one—one that has been in this house since the days your Grandfather was telling you about."

"Not a bad idea," said Grandfather. "By the way, Johnny, maybe you'd like to come to the barn with me now. I bought a horse for you yesterday. Thought you might like to ride in the parade tomorrow. Don't know what his name used to be, but I'm mighty fond of Yankee Doodle!"



Magic Days

I'll buy (when I'm rich)
a wagon, which
I'll hitch to a magic star—
it will whisk me forth
to the south and north,
and swing me near and far.

Away I'll go
to a land of snow,
to watch the bobsled races;
and skiers ride
down a dizzy slide,
with white wind in their faces.

'Giddy-ap, giddy-ap,
to the south of the map—
the Mardi Gras' in swing;
with dancing feet
on the crowded street,
and masks, and everything!

Now blossom time,
now harvest time,
now maple syrup a-stewing;
a fair, a feast,
out west, back east,
from bakes to barbecuing!

With a yip, heigh-ho,
to a rodeo,
I'll go, in a western town,
where cowboys breeze
through the air with ease,
as the broncs buck up and down.

Then away, away,
to a balmy day,
and sun-tanned cheeks and noses;
and floats of flowers,
that pass for hours,
in the Tournament of Roses.

Oh here, oh there,
oh everywhere,
are magic spots to be,
with queens to crown
and parades through town,
and stirring sights to see.

When I get rich,
I'll fill my itch
to travel to these glories;
but till that day,
I'll whisk away,
and get to see them anyway . . .
in stories, stories, stories!



The Shelter in the Back Yard

THE house that Jimmy lived in was just like all the other houses in that block in Brooklyn. It was red brick, with a low flight of steps in front. There was a little front yard, and a bigger yard in back. That afternoon he was sitting on the steps of his house in the sun. It was October, but it was warm enough just to sit there and watch the leaves drifting down from the maple trees. In fact, it was the fourth of October, and that was Jimmy's birthday. It was his birthday, but he was very

unhappy, and he had never been unhappy on his birthday before.

Mrs. Shapiro, who lived next door, came down the street with an armful of packages. She was the mother of Reuben and Aaron and Miriam. Jimmy knew them for he went to school with them, but he didn't play with them much. They kept pretty much to themselves.

"Hello, Jimmy," Mrs. Shapiro called. She wondered why he was sitting there looking so dismal.

"How's your mother?" Mrs. Shapiro asked.

"She's in the hospital," Jimmy answered. "We're going to have a new baby."

"A new baby?" Mrs. Shapiro said. "Why, that will be fine." And she went into the house with her bundles.

"All very fine," Jimmy said to himself.

gloomily. "All very fine, but how about my birthday? No decent birthday at all for a boy that's nine years old. No party, no birthday cake, no presents even." "We'll celebrate your birthday when your mother gets home with the new baby," his father had said. But when would that be? It wouldn't be on his birthday. And he didn't really want the new baby to come, anyway.

So Jimmy sat there in the warm autumn sun, and the hours of the afternoon slipped away.

It seemed to him that the Shapiros were very busy that afternoon. He saw Mr. Shapiro come out of the house and cut several big branches from the maple tree in their yard. Then, before long, Reuben and Aaron came along with their little express wagon loaded with sticks and branches. Afterwards Miriam came, and

he saw apples and squashes in her mother's string shopping bag.

"Hello," Miriam said to Jimmy. And Jimmy said, "Hello."

He wondered what they were doing anyway, but he didn't bother to think too much about it. He was thinking about the new baby, and about not having any birthday.

All afternoon he sat there, not wanting to go and play with the other boys on the block, not wanting to do anything. Finally he got up. Aunt Julie was keeping house till his mother came home. She would be getting supper.

He was just turning to go into the house, when Mrs. Shapiro came out and called to him.

"Couldn't you come to supper with us tonight?" Mrs. Shapiro said. "It's *Succoth*, you know."

Jimmy didn't know what *Succoth* was.

"I'll ask Aunt Julie," he said.

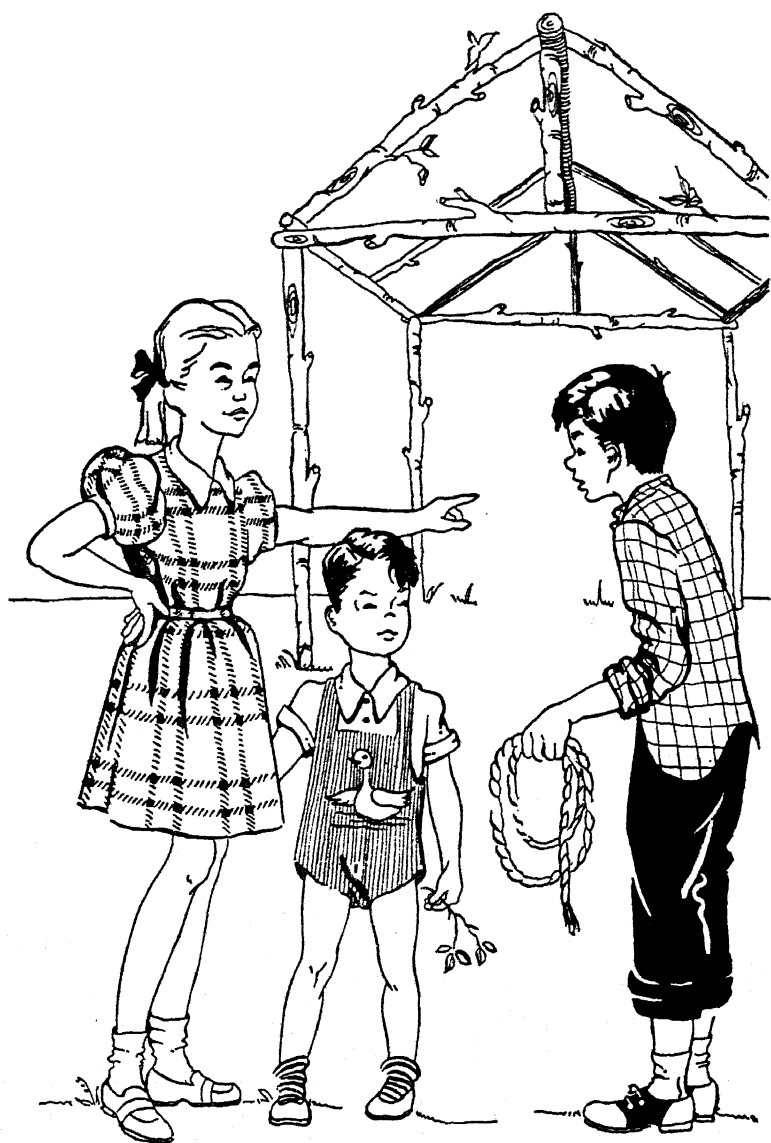
Aunt Julie said it would be all right for him to go to supper next door, only he mustn't stay too late.

To his surprise the Shapiros didn't have their supper in the dining room that night. They took him right through the basement and through the kitchen, and out into the back yard.

And there in the back yard was a little shelter built of branches, and in the shelter the supper table was spread with a red-and-white tablecloth.

"Come right in, Jimmy," Mr. Shapiro said, "and sit down here." And Mrs. Shapiro, and Reuben, and Aaron, and Miriam, all seemed glad to see him.

Jimmy sat down and looked around at the little house. It was made entirely of branches, right there in the back yard.



On the walls the boughs of the maple tree and the other branches were woven in close together, but the weaving of the roof was not so close—you could see patches of sky through the roof. All over the walls, fruits and vegetables were hung, to make a kind of pattern. There were crooked-neck squashes, and strings of onions, and cucumbers, and cabbages, and cauliflowers—all hanging on the walls of the little shelter. And on the table before them were great flat trays of fruit—apples and pears and lots of grapes, piled up in heaps.

Pretty soon Mrs. Shapiro began bringing the supper out of the house. It was steaming hot, and very good and spicy.

“Have some of this *gefüllte fish*,” Mrs. Shapiro said to him. “Have some of these *knishes*.”

Jimmy didn't know exactly what these

things were, but he ate them, and he liked them very much.

It began to get dark as they sat there in the little house, eating this good food. First the sky was yellow over the Shapiros' back yard, and then the yellow faded, and darkness came. They had finished their supper, so it didn't matter if it was dark. They could see the stars twinkling, up between the branches of the roof. They felt very peaceful and content.

Then finally, after a long time, Jimmy asked the question that he had been wanting to ask all along.

"Why are we eating our supper out here instead of in the dining room?" he said. For it seemed to him odd to be eating in the back yard.

There was a pause. Then Mr. Shapiro answered, sitting there in his place in the shadow.

"It is the custom of the Jews," he said. "It is commanded in the Jewish Law. When Moses brought our people away from Egypt, they spent long years wandering across the desert, and they had no houses to live in. They built themselves shelters out of whatever branches they could find, and the Lord took care of them. . . .

"That's why we build a little house like this every year—to remember how the Lord took care of the Children of Israel when they had no houses to live in."

"I know about Moses," Jimmy said, "But I didn't know they built little houses like this one."

"There must be hundreds of little houses made of boughs in the back yards all through Brooklyn, I suppose," Reuben said. "And people eating their suppers in them."

"Yes, that's true," Mrs. Shapiro added. "And all through the United States and Europe, and wherever Jewish people live—hundreds of little shelters, made of branches like this."

"There was one in the synagogue this morning," Miriam said. "It was a beautiful one, made of cornstalks, and there were so many vegetables there, beautifully arranged. The rabbi was reading, 'O, give thanks to the Lord for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.' " Miriam's voice was very soft as she spoke the words of the old psalm.

"Why, I know that one," Jimmy said. "They say that one in our church, too." He was very much pleased to think that he knew the same things the Shapiros knew.

Jimmy didn't stay very long after that.

"I think I'll have to go home now," he said. "My Aunt Julie said I was not to

stay too late and she might worry.”

“No,” Mrs. Shapiro said, “you’d better go now. Maybe you could come back again tomorrow night if you want to. You know, we’ll be eating our supper out here every day this week.”

“Why, I’d like to,” Jimmy said. “I’ll come again tomorrow.”

And he went back through the Shapiros’ kitchen and dining room, and out through their front gate, and down the street to his house next door.

“It was nice out there,” he was saying to himself. “I liked it. I liked the little shelter they made in the backyard, and I liked the *knishes*. . . . And I can go back tomorrow night.”

He climbed up his own front steps, and paused for a moment at the top. It was dark now, but the light from the lamppost shone down softly on the drift of yellow

leaves along the pavement. And Jimmy found, as he stood there, that he wasn't unhappy any longer.

He was thinking, "I'm going to ask my mother, when she comes home again, if I can have *Succoth* for my birthday. She won't know what it is, but I'll tell her. I could build a little shelter in our back yard.

"Maybe I could fix it so there would be room for the baby's crib. . . ."

"Have a nice time?" his Aunt Julie called to him when she heard him open the door.



Sally's Valentine

ONCE there was a little girl named Sally. Like most children she loved all festivals and holidays, Christmas, New Years, Valentine's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving.

In fact, no sooner was one holiday over, than she began to look forward to the next. Valentine's Day, Sally thought, was one of the very nicest. It came at just the right time, when Christmas, with all its joys and surprises, was a thing of the past, and Easter was still a long way off.

Breakfast at Sally's house every Valentine's Day was a festive occasion, for the valentines were opened then.

A large box with a slit in the lid had been put on the dining room table the night before and by morning there were valentines for everyone in the family. The postman, too, brought some in his bag. But they were all kept and opened at breakfast time.

In Sally's family there were Father and Mother, then her two older sisters, Cora and Jane. And, of course, Sally herself.

Cora and Jane both went to school everyday, while Sally, who was only five, stayed home.

Sometimes she felt lonely and left out. Her sisters had no time to play with her, and often had secrets they kept from her.

But Sally didn't mind. She had a secret all her own.

It was about Valentine's Day.

This year Valentine's Day was to be a very special one for Sally, for the very nicest thing in the world would happen then.

Cousin Caroline was coming to stay! Of all her relations—aunts, uncles and cousins—Cousin Caroline was her favorite. Although she was quite grown up, when she came to stay with them she played with Sally by the hour, just as though she were another little girl. She never seemed to tire or to think Sally's dolls and toy animals silly and babyish, as Cora and Jane did.

So, the very moment that Sally had heard that Cousin Caroline would be there for Valentine's Day, she had made up her mind she would look for the very nicest valentine in the world, and when she had

found it she would buy it and put it in the Valentine Box for Cousin Caroline.

She wanted it to be so beautiful it would outshine all the others.

And now she had seen the very one in a shop window in the village.

It was quite the grandest one there. Bigger and better than all the others.

When first she saw it she gazed at it with rapture.

In the middle was a big red heart resting on a snowy frill of lacy paper. All round was a border of tiny hearts strung together with painted blue ribbon. Underneath, it said—

The Rose is Red
The Violet Blue
Sugar is Sweet
And So are You

But the VALENTINE COST FIFTY

WHOLE CENTS. Where was Sally to get fifty more cents? She had spent nearly all the money in her bank for valentines for Father and Mother and Cora and Jane.

She thought and thought.

There was, she knew, about ten cents left in her bank.

If she didn't spend a single penny of her weekly pocket money till Valentine's Day she would have thirty cents more.

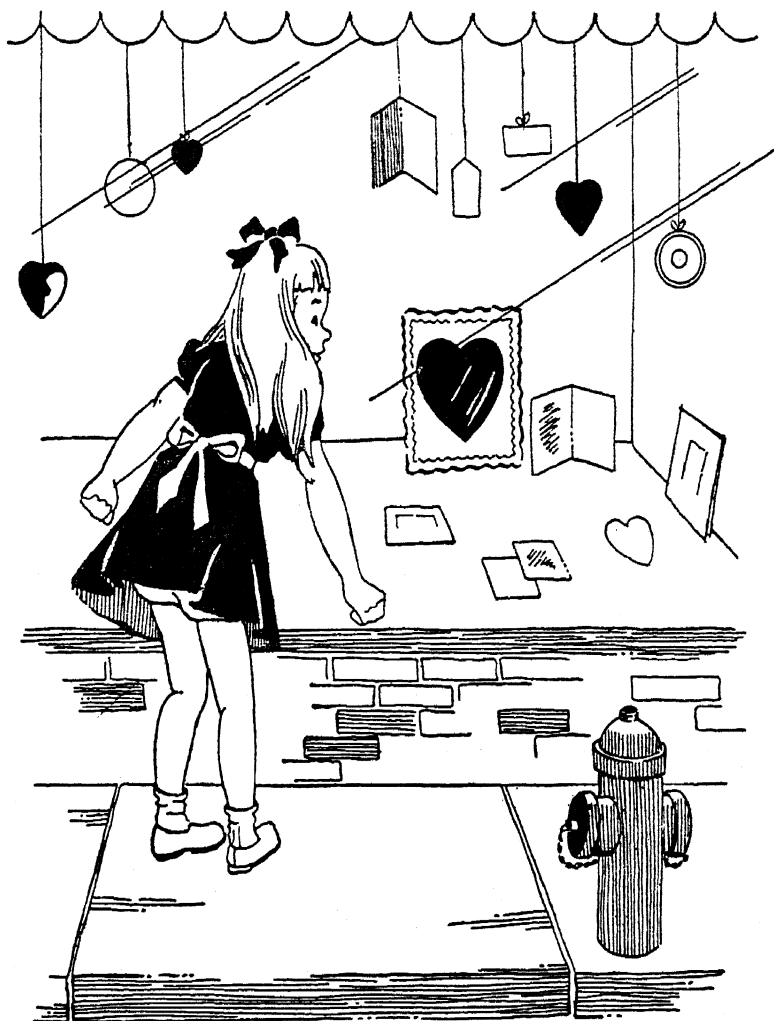
The other ten she would get somehow and then the valentine would be hers.

She thought about it, waking and sleeping.

So, on the next two Saturdays, when Sally got her pocket money, she put it away carefully. Not without a sigh for the things it could have bought. For it must be admitted, Sally was a spendthrift. Money just slipped through her fingers.

As a rule, her pocket money was spent

STATIONERY



almost as soon as she got it. But now she was saving it. Her bank was getting heavier week by week and she had earned ten more cents doing an errand for an old lady who lived nearby.

She needed only ten cents and tomorrow was Saturday—the day for her pocket money.

When Mother gave it to her next morning she flew upstairs to count her savings. She wanted to be sure that there was no mistake. Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, FIFTY.

There was no mistake.

In a few minutes the beautiful valentine in the shop window would be hers.

Mother changed her savings into a bright new shining half dollar. Sally started off for the village.

The day was a beautiful one with the sun shining brightly. Sally sang happily

to herself as she hurried along. She reached the shop. Her valentine was still in the window. She gave a sigh of relief.

She opened the door and almost ran to the counter. "Please Mrs. Topping," she began, "may I . . ." Then she stopped suddenly, for Mrs. Topping, who kept the Village shop, was busy talking to another customer.

Very busy, for the lady buying ribbon couldn't seem to decide what color she wanted. First it was blue and then it was pink. Mrs. Topping took down roll after roll of ribbon from the shelf.

Meanwhile, Sally stood restlessly first on one foot and then on the other waiting her turn.

Would the lady never make up her mind?

Just then there was a little bark outside the shop door.

Sally turned. There was Sandy, the cocker spaniel from down the road. He and Sally were the greatest friends, playing together almost every day. She went to the door and opened it, stepping outside to pet him.

Sandy was so delighted to see her, and greeted her so boisterously, that she nearly lost her balance. Then exactly what happened Sally never quite knew. Suddenly her precious coin, instead of being in her hand, was rolling away down the street.

It rolled and rolled. Sally ran after it and Sandy ran after Sally, thinking what a new exciting game it was.

Sally, breathless, had nearly reached it when it rolled right off the pavement into the gutter and then down the dark wet drain. Sally stood still, frozen with horror.

Then, with a sinking heart she looked

down the drain. The coin had disappeared from sight and with it, all her hopes for Valentine's Day.

It was no use going back to the shop now. She turned sadly away and started for home, followed by the puzzled Sandy. Now the sun seemed to shine less brightly, and Sally no longer sang to herself as she walked along.

Mother was surprised to see her back so soon, and seeing her downcast face asked what had happened.

Through her tears Sally told her story. How she had saved to buy the nicest valentine of them all for Cousin Caroline, and now she wouldn't be able to give her even one.

Mother listened quietly and dried Sally's tears. "But there are still three more days till Valentine's Day," she said.

"You have time to make a card for Cousin Caroline."

For a long time Sally said nothing. She was still thinking of the valentine in the shop window.

But soon, being a sensible little girl, she told herself it was no use crying over spilt milk. She went to the cupboard and got out her paintbox.

Mother, anxious to help, gave her paper, scissors and a jar of paste.

So poor Sally started, though at first very halfheartedly. But she **MUST** have a valentine to give to Cousin Caroline even if it had no chance of outshining all the others. First, she painted a big red heart. The one in the shop window had rested on white paper lace. Where could she get that?

Mother came to the rescue again, this time with a white lace paper doily. When

the red heart had dried, Sally cut it out and pasted it on the doily.

How nice it looked!

Sally herself began to feel more cheerful.

Then she pasted them both on the stiff white paper and added more tiny hearts . . . and painted blue ribbons.

There was one more thing. The poem! She had read it so often that she knew it by heart.

Carefully, in red and blue letters she printed:

The Rose is Red
The Violet Blue
Sugar is Sweet
And So are You

Now the valentine was finished. Mother came in to admire it and gave her a big white envelope to put it in.

On the outside Sally wrote:
Cousin Caroline

The day before Valentine's Day Cousin Caroline herself arrived. Mother and Sally met her at the station. How lovely it was to see her again.

Sally woke the next morning knowing that something very nice was about to happen.

Then she remembered. It was Valentine's Day and Cousin Caroline was staying with them.

But she still felt sad when she thought of the beautiful valentine in the shop window.

However, she dressed quickly.

Everyone was down before her. Father sat at the head of the table with the box of valentines in front of him.

What fun they had tearing open the envelopes, wondering where each one came from.

Cousin Caroline already had a big pile by her plate. Sally wondered when her valentine would appear. It was nearly the last.

At last! There it was in its big white envelope.

When Cousin Caroline opened it her eyes grew bright with pleasure. Her face was wreathed in smiles.

Sally had never seen her look so happy.

"Who could have done this?" she said. "Of all my lovely valentines this is the very nicest. In fact, I think it is the very nicest valentine I have ever had in my whole life."

Her eyes met Sally's across the table.

Sally was nearly bursting with pride. But, of course, she couldn't say anything. One never told about a valentine.

But her heart was singing, and she gave a long happy sigh.

Only three days ago she had been sure that Valentine's Day was spoiled for her, just because she had lost her fifty cents.

Now the fifty cents, or the grand valentine in the shop window didn't seem to matter a bit.

For Cousin Caroline had liked her card, the one she made all by herself, better than all the others.

So Sally's Valentine's Day wasn't spoiled after all. In fact, when it was over and she lay tucked up warmly in bed, she decided it was the very nicest one she could remember.

Pronunciation Guide to Spanish Phrases

Used in Pedro Wins the Battle of Flowers

PEDRO—PAY'DRO (*Peter*)

CHIKUITO—CHEE KEE'TOE (*Little one—or little*)

RIO GRANDE—REE'O GRAN'DEE (*Great River*)

DIEZ Y SEIS DE SEPTIEMBRE—DEE' AS EE SAYCE DAY
SEP TEE EM' BREE
(*16th of September*)

LOS PASTORES—LOS PAHS TOE'RESS (*The Shep-
herds*)

CINCO DE MAYO—SEEN'KO DAY MY'O (*Fifth of
May*)

FIESTA—FEE ESS'TAH (*celebration or festival*)

SAN JACINTO—SAHN HAH SEEN'TOE OR SAN JUH
SIN'TOE

ALAMO—AH'LAH MOE

LA VILLITA—LAH VEE YEE'TAH (*The Little
Village*)

Pedro Wins the Battle of Flowers

THE best thing about going to school in a big town like San Antonio, Texas, Pedro thought, was having so many festivals. Always before, when he was just a little boy, a real *chiquito*, in first and second grades, his family had lived on a ranch in South Texas—between San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley, and Pedro went to a country school.

Now, Pedro's father, Big Pedro García, had come to work in San Antonio. Pedro himself, sometimes called Little Pedro

García, was little no longer. He was in fourth grade. And San Antonio was an enchanted place.

First of all, just after school started, there had been the celebration of *Diez y seis de Septiembre*—Sixteenth of September—when all the Mexican people had gathered in the parks for programs of speeches and music and dancing. Pedro had worn a colorful Mexican costume and danced a Mexican dance with other boys and girls from fourth grade. And he had been proud to know that long ago, on another sixteenth of September, Mexico had decided to become a free country. Just like the United States!

At Christmas, Pedro had gone with Rosa, his mother, and with Big Pedro, to see *Los Pastores* in a back yard near their home. In the miracle play of *Los Pastores*—The Shepherds—Mexican actors told

again the beautiful story of the birth of the Christ Child in Bethlehem.

Cinco de Mayo, the other children told Pedro, would be another fine festival. It would come on the fifth of May and would be celebrated by all of San Antonio—Mexican people and people who were not Mexican, alike. It was a national holiday in Mexico, they said, but some parts of Texas also made much of the day.

And now! Now was one of the most exciting times of all. It was April in Texas—April in San Antonio. Warm breezes blew up from the Gulf of Mexico. Blue skies smiled on millions of flowers in every park and dooryard. Birds sang in trees that were filled with other flowers. It was time for the *Fiesta de San Jacinto*—a whole week of good times and celebrating.

Pedro sat in the quiet schoolroom. Soon school would be out for the

afternoon. Boys and girls were a little sleepy from the warm sunshine at the windows. Miss Andrews, the fourth grade teacher, looked a little sleepy, too. They were all waiting for the closing bell.

Suddenly Pedro held up his hand. Miss Andrews smiled.

“Yes, Pedro?”

“Miss Andrews? This—this *fiesta* —this *San Jacinto*, what is it for? A saint’s birthday, maybe? A day to shoot firecracker—like Fourth of July? On the ranch, we shoot firecracker on Fourth of July. We hang up stocking Christmastime. That’s all *fiesta* we have on ranch.”

“Pedro, I’m glad you asked.” Miss Andrews had a story-telling look in her eye. “San Jacinto Day is the twenty-first of April. On that day in 1836 Texas won its independence from Mexico. General Sam Houston won a great battle on that day.

He defeated the Mexican General, Santa Anna, in the Battle of San Jacinto."

"Oh!" said Pedro. But he did not feel so good. He looked around the room. Everybody else seemed to feel all right. And most of them were Mexicans, too. Here and there a boy or girl had fair skin or yellow hair or a name like Jones or Thompson. But most of them were brown-faced and dark-eyed. Most of them were named Rodrigo or Gonzales or something easy to say like that.

Pedro had more to say. Miss Andrews waited. Pedro's best friend, one of the fair-skinned ones, with red hair and freckles and the name of Pete Jones, waited, too.

"Miss Andrews . . ." Pedro's mind was working so hard it made his face frown. "Miss Andrews, I'm a Texan, no?"

"Of course, you're a Texan, Pedro."

"But, Miss Andrews, I'm a Mexican, too?"

"Yes, Pedro—a Texas-Mexican. It's a good thing to be. You speak two languages. Most boys and girls your age cannot do that, you know. You are like a nice little, bad little, good little sign of friendship between two countries."

Pedro almost lost his frown at that. He almost grinned.

"But I'm not so little," he said.

"A big sign, then, Pedro." Miss Andrews grinned for him. "A good sign!"

"But—" Pedro still did not understand. "I am Texan. I am Mexican." He threw out his hands as though maybe they could talk for him. "I am friend Sam Houston. I am friend Santa Anna—maybe. How I fight battle with myself? How I win fight? How I want myself to come to my celebration if I do win? After I lose?"

Miss Andrews started to answer, but the bell rang just then, and the schoolroom was no longer quiet. Everyone but Pedro made a lot of noise leaving the room.

Pedro marched silently down the street toward home. Pete Jones marched with him.

"Hey, Pedro!" Pete said. "What's eating on you, huh? What's the difference, huh? You'll have a good time!"

"Maybe," Pedro answered. But he did not think so. He did not believe he would have a good time.

"Sure!" Pete said. "Listen. It's like this. One whole week. First day, Monday, the King of the festival comes up the river. We'll see that. Then we go to the Alamo and take flowers. Tuesday, we do our dance Miss Andrews taught us. With all the other kids. In the city auditorium. You know—the Children's

Fete. Wednesday and Thursday, there'll be other things. And Friday—Oh, boy! There'll be the big parade—the Battle of Flowers parade! And we'll ride in my Pop's milk wagon—all decorated with flowers!"

"Oh, boy!" said Pedro, trying to get excited, too, but he did not sound very excited.

Monday night was beautiful. All of San Antonio lined the River's edge—under the bridges, by the side of tall buildings, on the grassy slopes near *La Villita*, the lovely restored old Spanish village. Pedro and Pete had their places early. They ate their supper sandwiches right there on the spot. They had with them two bouquets of slightly wilted roses from Pedro's yard.

And then, at dusk, the King came. Pedro knew he was not a real king—just an ordinary San Antonio businessman

acting the part of "King" for Fiesta week. But as he came up the River on his flower-decked barge, he looked like a very real King, indeed. Pedro shouted as loud as Pete did when the barge came in sight. He felt very proud when the mayor presented the keys of the city to the King.

"And now!" Pete cried. "Now we'll take our roses to the Alamo!"

They fell into line with all the other boys and girls and men and women of San Antonio. White faces, brown faces, here and there a black face. English-speaking voices, Mexican voices, the slightly different voices of Texas-Germans made friendly sounds as the people marched.

They marched to the old mission building in the heart of San Antonio. They laid their flowers—for most of the people were carrying flowers—about the

walls of the mission that was called the Alamo.

"They died here," Pete said in a hushed voice. "They died here for Texas. So everybody could be free."

"Me, too?" asked Pedro. A little wind passed over the low gray walls. Everyone was very quiet, remembering. Pedro put his flowers beside Pete's. He was a Texan! But—he was a Mexican, too. And at the Alamo, the Mexicans and Texans had fought. . . . Pedro shook his head.

Tuesday night was not quite so beautiful as Monday, but it was even noisier and maybe just a little more fun. Dressed in their gay Mexican costumes, Miss Andrews' class tried to keep together backstage in the great city auditorium. Pedro knew that Rosa and Big Pedro were out in the audience, waiting to see them

dance their Mexican dance. He felt pretty good. He always wanted to laugh when he saw Pete's bright red hair and freckles above his Mexican costume.

"All right! Laugh!" Pete said. "But I guess you'd look just as funny all dressed up like Sam Houston or somebody!"

Pedro didn't laugh any more. He knew Pete was just talking, but—Pedro wished he knew how to feel about this *Fiesta de San Jacinto*—this Battle of Flowers, as some people called it. On the Fourth of July he could feel all American. On the Sixteenth of September, he could feel glad his people came from that part of America called Mexico. But now—how could he be glad he was an American-Texan and glad his people came from Mexico, too? When this festival was *for* his Texas part but *against* his Mexican part!

Pedro worried so hard he stumbled in

the Mexican dance when it came their turn to go out on the stage. But the audience did not seem to mind. They clapped and clapped. Miss Andrews did not seem to mind either. She hugged every one of them.

“Now!” she said. “Now you’re all real Texans. You’ve taken part in a San Jacinto Children’s Fete, which is what every San Antonio child should do!”

Wednesday and Thursday, Pete and Pedro spent most of their spare time picking flowers to go on Pete’s Pop’s milk wagon for the big Battle of Flowers parade. Pete’s Mom helped them. She explained why it was called Battle of Flowers.

“The first celebration of the victory of Texas at the Battle of San Jacinto,” she said, “was held long afterward, when the President of the United States came to visit San Antonio in April. April twenty-

first is the day, you know, though the real battle was fought near Houston rather than San Antonio. In this first celebration the people held a make-believe battle in the President's honor—a battle of flowers." And just for fun, she started throwing flowers at the two boys. "Like this," she said. "Just like this!"

Still Pedro was not sure he had a right to ride in the parade. His people—they were the bad ones in this battle, he thought. He waited on Friday for Pete's Pop to pick him up in the beautiful flowery milk wagon.

Pete came over ahead of the wagon. He waited with Pedro.

"I don't go, I think," said Pedro.

"Hey!" Pete looked at him in disgust. "Are you crazy? Miss the best part of all Fiesta week?"

Pedro moved his shoulders and threw

out his hands the way he did when he wished his hands could talk for him.

"I'm—I'm not like Sam Houston," he said. "I'm—I'm like Santa Anna, I guess. But I do not like him very much. I do not belong in a Battle of Flowers milk wagon."

"Well!" Pete straddled his legs far apart. He dug his hands deep in his pockets. "You make me tired! You—you think too much!" And suddenly, the grin Pete usually wore left his freckled face. He glared at Pedro. "You're . . . you're awful dumb!" he cried.

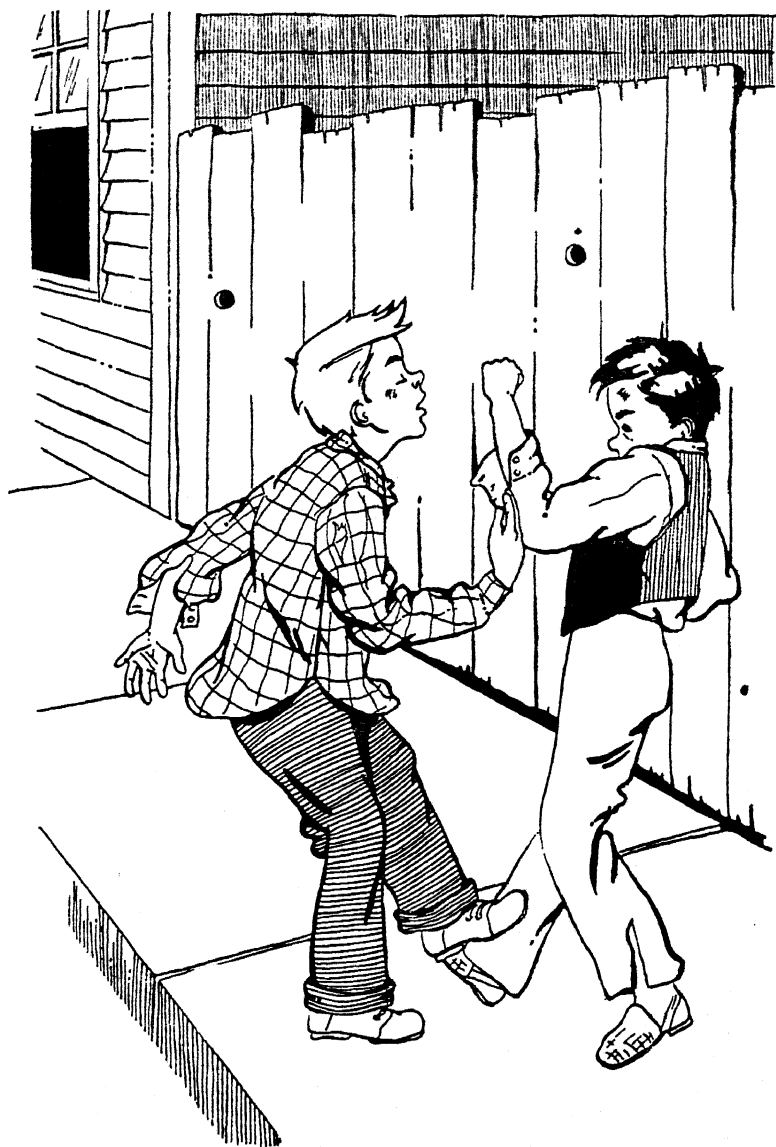
No one could tell quite what happened then. But in a second's time, two big boys from Miss Andrews' fourth grade were rolling each other in San Antonio earth. And, a few minutes later, the black-haired boy had given the red-haired one a very bloody nose.

"Oh!" Pedro jumped up in dismay. "Pete! I'm sorry. I— Here! My handkerchief is pretty clean."

"Uh! Awright . . . Huh! Thanks . . . Thanks, Pedro." Pete was sure puffing. And then Pete began to laugh. He mopped up the blood as he laughed. "Say!" he said. "This is our Battle of San Jacinto! You win. You're Sam Houston, I guess. Me—I'm beat. But I won't be Santa Anna, 'cause I don't like him any better'n you do. But I will be Mexico. We had war. I called you dumb. Maybe you ain't dumb. So you win! But we're still friends. See?"

Suddenly, Pedro did see! He, too, began to laugh.

"And next year," he cried, "we celebrate my winning. We have our own Fiesta. But you celebrate with me. 'Cause we're friends, huh?"



“Sure,” said Pete. “But here comes my Pop. And don’t he look beautiful!”

He certainly did. He drove the most wonderful milk wagon ever seen on the streets of San Antonio.

“Battle of Flowers, here we come!” shouted Pete. “Hurry up, Sam Houston!”

And Sam Houston, alias Pedro García, happy as a Texas mockingbird, hurried.



Harvest Home

LUTHER LANDIS took his hand off the biggest pumpkin on the farm to wave to Pop down in the apple orchard. And the pumpkin rolled off his wagon and broke wide open!

That is what happened to the pumpkin Luther had watered and tended all summer to take to the County Fair.

It was the worst thing that had ever happened in all his ten years, Luther thought, as he wiped his hands on his overalls, and ran them through his

summer-cut stubbly hair. He gazed at the ruins of the pumpkin with eyes that exactly matched his faded blue shirt.

It had been a lovely September morning until that moment. The hills on the other side of the valley, which Pop always claimed were the most beautiful in Pennsylvania, were blue velvet. Scarlet sage bloomed in the dooryard of every stone farmhouse. Cattle grazed peacefully in the pastures behind big red barns, and the corn stood in shocks in the fields.

Pop was driving the tractor slowly through the orchard. The trees were full of pickers, and the trailer was filling up with baskets of apples that shone like jewels in the sun.

Today, Pop was going to pick out a basket of the very biggest apples to go to the Fair. Luther's pumpkin was to have gone, too.

Pop's apples always won first prize. Then, the very next Sunday, they were placed before the altar in the Harvest Home celebration at the brick church across the road.

Every Fall the farm folk of Pennsylvania brought their best to their churches as a thank-offering for the bountiful harvest.

It was an old custom brought over from Germany, Grandpop had told Luther.

"We Pennsylvania Germans never had Thanksgiving until Lincoln asked us to, during the Civil War. I remember my Father telling how some New Englanders lived on the next farm. The Dutch thought they were a little queer because every Fall they ate turkey on a day called Thanksgiving, a day proclaimed by the governor of Massachusetts."

Luther was glad that he was a modern Pennsylvania Dutch boy so that he could

celebrate both Thanksgiving and Harvest Home.

The Reverend Mr. Kurtz had promised Luther that he could place his pumpkin right in front of the pulpit on Harvest Home Sunday. But now it lay split wide open on the ground, its moist seeds glistening.

It reminded Luther of Humpty Dumpty.

"All the king's horses and all the king's men,

Couldn't put my pumpkin together again," he muttered.

Speaking of kings reminded Luther of Grandpop's stories of the peace-loving German and Swiss people. They were tired of their quarrelsome rulers who fought their wars back and forth across their farm lands, and forced their sons into the army. So they had come by the

thousands to Pennsylvania, way back in Colonial days. And like the Pilgrims, they, too, had been seeking freedom to worship in their own way. But they were unlike the Pilgrims, who drove all who differed with them out of their colony. The Pennsylvania Germans were willing to grant this freedom to others. The Lutheran and the Reformed believers got along perfectly together. They had shared the church across the road for one hundred and seventy years.

Then after great-great-great grandfather Johann Landis had cleared this very land on which Luther was now standing, he had gone to fight in another war, the Revolutionary War.

Just thinking of Grandpop made Luther feel better. Grandpop's rheumatism kept him on the porch most of the time. He hadn't been able to come down into the

field to see his pumpkin. He would show him the ruins of it, at least.

"Ach," said Grandpop, "dot is the vorstest thing vot could happen."

Grandmom came to the door, drying her hands on her apron.

"Such a beautiful pumpkin! It would be a sin to waste it. Quick, Luther, get the butcher knife and cut it in pieces. I vill can it this morning already."

"Now my pumpkin can't go to the Fair," mourned Luther.

"But it can still feed someone who is hungry," said Grandmom. "And that is more important still. . . . Save some of the seeds and maybe you can grow even a bigger pumpkin next year."

By the time Luther had spread some of the seeds in the sun to dry, Grandmom had the pumpkin canned in big two-quart jars.

As usual, Pop's apples took the prize at the County Fair. The blue ribbon for the largest pumpkin went to one not nearly as big as Luther's.

The next great day for Luther was Harvest Home Sunday. He and Grandpop sat on the porch all Saturday watching the cars and trucks that stopped at the church. Men carried in baskets of cabbages and bags of potatoes, and bushels of apples and peaches. Women brought home-baked bread, all kinds of vegetables and bouquets of asters and dahlias.

"It will be the finest Harvest Home our church has ever had," said Grandpop. He never missed a Sunday. Always, he sat up front at one side of the pulpit with the other old men, and said a loud "Amen" when he agreed with the preacher.

"If only I hadn't broken my big pumpkin," sighed Luther. "Reverend

Kurtz promised I could put it in front of the whole display. How everyone would have stared to see such a big pumpkin in church!"

"There are plenty of other pumpkins down in the field," suggested Grandpop.

"But they aren't the same."

"Hush your nonsense," said Grandmom sharply from the doorway. "Go get three or four of them." Just then several women got out of a car with their arms full of home-canned fruit. "Or if it must be your pumpkin, go down in the cellar and get the jars, and take them over, like the others are doing."

It took Luther several trips to cross the road carefully with all the jars filled with pumpkin. He didn't want to have another accident.

The women who were covering the shelves and tables with crepe paper and



arranging the display, promised to put his jars right in front.

"All of these from one pumpkin yet! It must have been a big one," they exclaimed.

Next morning the church was packed. Plates of grapes, baskets of new laid eggs, warty squashes, piles of fragrant pears, and glasses of jelly that matched the ruby panes in the windows, had been added to the display.

All raised their voices in the hymn;

Come, ye thankful people come.
Raise the song of harvest-home.
All is safely gathered in,
Ere the winter storms begin.
God our Maker doth provide,
For our wants to be supplied.
Come to God's own temple, come;
Raise the song of Harvest Home.

The Reverend Kurtz shook Luther's and

Pop's hands as they went out the door.

"You will take the things this afternoon?"

Pop nodded.

"Take them where, Pop?"

"You know. The preacher gets some and the rest go to the Orphans' Home in town. You can ride along in the truck with me."

The display was taken down late in the afternoon and loaded into Pop's truck.

Luther clung to the bouncy seat as Pop's truck sped down the winding road. First they left some of everything at the preacher's house. Then they drove on to the tall red-brick building that was the Orphans' Home. The long narrow windows gave the place a kind of bleak look.

"I wouldn't like to live here," thought Luther. "I like it much better out on the

farm with Pop and Grandmom and Grandpop."

Several boys came out to help unload the truck.

"What is this?" asked one, as he lifted out Luther's jars.

"That is a pumpkin I raised already, to be baked into pies," explained Luther proudly.

"Pumpkin pie! Whoopee!" One of the orphans turned a cartwheel.

"Pumpkin pie! Whoopee!" echoed all the others.

As the truck hurried homeward, the fireflies rose like sparks in the darkness.

"Did you hear those orphans yell 'Whoopee!' when they saw my old pumpkin all ready to be made into pie? It was better than winning the ribbon at the County Fair," yawned Luther. And in a minute he was asleep with his head against Pop's shoulder.

Con Og and His Donkey

THERE was a boy in Kerry once, and it's hard times he had, he and his father. For the father was a hard man. Con More was his name. Things had gone against him. First it's his wife took sick. And he had to sell his cow to pay for her care. Then didn't the wife die. Now he had no wife to keep the house, and to milk the cow, and make butter, and sell it. Nor did he have a cow either. And his crops were poor. Instead of giving thanks for what he had, and making the most of it,

it's in a rage he was with God for taking his wife—and the cow, too. No hope there was at all in Con More. And it's never a prayer he said all the day long. So it's worse things were to be for him, and for the small one of his two sons. Con Og was the boy—young Con.

Con Og had a brother. Shaun was his name. 'Twould be a bad day that Shaun wouldn't come in laughing, and toss Con Og to the ceiling. It's big and hearty Shaun was. And he'd tell stories by the fire after they'd had their bit of supper. But the father, Con More, he'd sit there as if it's alone he was with his black thoughts and his discouragement.

One day Big Con and Shaun were working outside. And Con Og, the small boy, was turning the turf to dry it for the fire, and tending the chickens, and sweeping the house out with a broom he'd

made for himself. Then didn't he see his brother Shaun tearing back to the house, Con More after him, and Con More calling Shaun every bad name he could think of. Along came their skinny old horse, and the horse tried to come in the house with them.

"Take that useless animal out of here," says the father, Con More.

"That I will," says Shaun, "and myself too." He leaps on the horse and off he goes over the hill. It's the last they saw of him, him or the horse.

Now it's by himself Con More was, to tend his land and his crops, carrying what he could to market on his back, Con Og being small. And it's little they had to buy food when the terrible winter came on them. Potatoes they had and oaten bread, and little else.

But two things were a comfort to Con

Og. He had a book, 'twas about blessed Saint Patrick it was. And he could read it, for Shaun had taught him. And he had a friend who'd bring milk and butter now and then, when Con More was out of the house. Sheila was the name of his friend. It's deep blue eyes Sheila had, and the black lashes around them, and the thick black hair in plaits down her back. It's a Donavan she was. Sure Con More was no friend of the Donavans.

"It's sad I am for you," said Sheila one day when it's out in the sun they were. There was a bench by the door where you could be sitting out of the wind with the wall at your back and it warm from the sun. It's pleasant it was there and far you could see, over fields and glens and forests to the purple mountains. Sure 'twas a good place to be.

"They'll be taking you away," says

Sheila. "Soon now Father Tom himself will come, and it's he will take you to a place for homeless boys."

"For why," says Con Og, the small boy. "I have a home, haven't I?" says he.

"Musha, 'tis no home when there's neither hope nor prayer in it," says Sheila. And she leaps up then, and is off down the hill, for fear his father would find her there. Well they knew Con More would not have her in the house. Sure it's about her that he'd had the falling out with his son Shaun.

When Sheila had gone, Con Og thought about what she'd said. "'Tis true," he says to himself. "There's neither hope nor prayer here. I must be off for myself, before the priest can come to take me." He gets a handkerchief and puts a cake in it for his journey. And he goes off up the hill, his shoes in his hand so he could put

them on when he'd come to a city. But he hadn't gone far before he remembered his book. It's afraid to go back he was, lest his father would see him. So he sits down under a rowan tree, and he thinks about the book. Sure he knew the most of it by heart. First, he thinks about Patrick when it's a boy he was and he slaving for a hard master in pagan Ireland. He remembers that it's off and away Patrick went and got on a ship, and he traveling then over far countries and a slave no more.

"Without the book," thinks Con Og, "I'll have to remember the rest of the story." Sitting there, it's as if he had the pages of the book before him. As he is thinking, he comes to remember the best part of all. 'Twas that Patrick came back. He could have had his ease in bright and pleasant places, and learning the wisdom

of great men. But he came back to Ireland. Bringing hope with him, he came. And he kindled a fire of faith that would never go out.

With that thought, up gets Con Og, and he runs back the way he'd come. He sees in his mind the cold house with no fire in it, and his father coming in to it in the dark. "St. Patrick, pray for us," says he, running over stones and through briars. "It's not much I can do in the way of prayer," says he. "But I can make the house warm, if nothing else. And there'd be no hope at all in it with the fire out."

When he gets to the house, he finds only gray ashes in the fireplace, and he knows no way to light the turf. There is wind with rain in it, and the one hen they have left is sitting in a corner. Perishing she is with the cold.

"Me being poor in prayer," says Con Og,

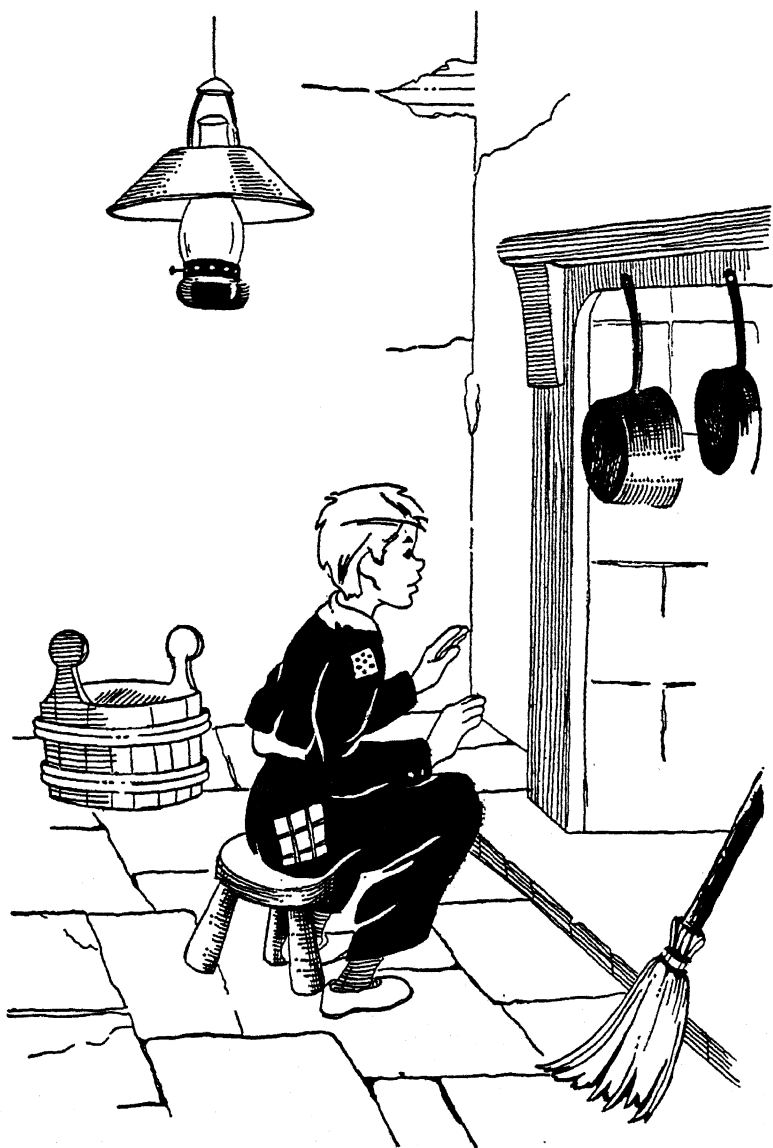
“let you pray to God for me, Patrick,” says he. “You that had no fear of the powers of darkness and lit fire on the Hill of Slane.”

With that Con Og stirred the ashes, and he found a seed of fire beneath. He fed bits of turf to it. Then he filled the big pot with water for to boil the potatoes, and he began to sing. The fire is blazing, and the water steaming, and the hen clucking, and he singing, when Con More comes in the door out of the rain.

His father had little to say. But it's glad he was to spread his hands to the fire, and to sit near it eating warm food. It's carrying rocks he had been all the day to clear a field.

“And will we plant the garden in the field after Patrick's Day?” says Con Og.

“Can I plow it alone with no horse?” says Con More.



"I don't know, could I pull the plow for you?" says Con Og. "I'm a year older than I was last year."

"Not this year nor the next could you pull a plow," said the father. "You'd need the strength of St. Patrick's garron to do it."

"Musha," said Con Og. "But it's only a little horse he was, the garron, and the strength he had for any load 'twas from the prayers of St. Patrick it was."

But his father says no more, and he is gone in the morning before the boy woke.

"It's nothing we have now but hope and prayer," says Con Og, and he looking the whole place over for food, and finding the last potato. "But I'll feed the hope as I fed the fire," says he to himself. "To get something you have to give something, that's the way of it, I'm thinking," says he. Then his eye lights on the hen. "I wonder

now," says he, "would someone be paying me for a good laying hen."

Off he goes up the hill to the road to town. 'Tis the day of a fair and others are traveling there with animals, bringing them to market. So he goes along with the hen under his arm. When he gets to the town, the first thing he sees is a fine little donkey. There is a stranger in city clothes buying the donkey, a man with a hat pulled over his eyes. But Con Og has hope all the same.

He shows the hen to everyone. "'Tis a fine laying hen," he says. After a while, a girl gives him a goose for it. And he gives the goose to a man for a small pig. But no one wants to pay him for the small pig. He gives the pig at last to an old woman for a clock. The sun is getting low now, so he stands on a box, holding up the clock.

“Who’ll buy? Who’ll buy?” he shouts. “ ’Tis a fine clock it is, with it ticking the minutes, and the hours, and the whole sweep of the day.”

It’s a strange thing now, but the more he shouts, the more people come, and they tell each other that it is a remarkable clock. Most of them have no clock at all, and can tell only by the sun when the day is going. None of them has a clock so fine. They offer him one thing and another, and more and more. But Con Og says no to all.

“ ’Tis worth more,” he shouts. “And it ticking the minutes and the hours and the whole sweep of the day.” He sees the stranger on the edge of the crowd and the fine little donkey with him.

“What will you take for it, small boy?” they shout.

“Only a donkey,” says Con. “A donkey to pull my father’s plow.” His heart is in

his mouth then, for he sees a stir in the crowd. And a boy is leading the donkey to him! Con gives the boy the clock to take back to the stranger, and he catches hold of the donkey then, and he gets on its back. It's happy Con Og is, and he riding home.

"My little flower of a donkey, my Blaheen," he says. "It's you that will pull the plow, and all will be well with us yet."

When he gets home, Con More is there before him. It's working for a rich farmer Con More has been and he has food for them both. "Where is the hen?" says the father.

"I took her to the fair," says Con Og. "But you'll see I got something better." And he shows him the strong little donkey to pull the plow. His father says it's a great wonder entirely.

"Is it the fairies were in it, that you got

the donkey and you with only a hen to sell?" says Con More.

" 'Twas not the fairies," says Con Og, "though I wouldn't be saying anything against them. It's St. Patrick was in it for sure, and maybe the good heart of a stranger."

"Will you plant the garden then after Patrick's Day?" says Con Og when they are sitting by the fire.

"Can I plant anything at all, without seed?" says Con More. "Even St. Patrick couldn't do that. It fails me to plant without seed."

In the morning it's thinking about seed, Con Og is, and wondering how he can get it. He can't bother Con More, for it's sick and sore his father is, and worn out with worry. Con Og brings hot tea to him, and the father says he'll stay there for the day.

The boy goes out then to be bringing a bit of food and drink to the donkey.

“And how are you, my Blaheen?” he says.

“How are you, yourself?” says the donkey.

“Oh, can you speak?” says Con Og.

“Now and then,” says the donkey.

“That’s fine now,” says Con Og, “for we’re in more trouble. It may be you can help me. If I can get seed, ’twill give courage maybe to my father. How can I get it at all?”

“To get something you have to go where it is. I know that,” says the donkey.

With that Con Og hitches the little fellow to a cart they have, and the two of them go up the road. Blaheen trots along with a will. After a mile or two he turns off and goes up to a farm with houses and

sheds and a big barn. There are cows and horses and pigs and dogs, so it must be well off the people are.

“What can I do for you?” says the farmer when they come trotting up to his door.

“It’s looking for seed I am,” says Con Og. “Since you’re well off,” says he, “perhaps you can give me some and make a bargain with me.”

“I have seed, and it may be that we can make a bargain,” says the farmer. “What can you pay?”

“Nothing now,” says Con Og. “But with the help of God and St. Patrick, we’ll be paying you, my father and I. ’Twill be when the seed is grown up to grain and vegetables.”

“And if the crops are poor, what then?” says the farmer.

“Then I’ll give you my strong little donkey. It’s clever he is, too.”

The donkey speaks to Con Og then, very low so that the farmer couldn't hear. "Let me loose," says he. Con Og takes the cart away from him, and the donkey stands on his hind legs and does a little dance, his long ears flopping. Then he pulls off the farmer's cap and runs away with it jumping a wall. After a minute he comes leaping back and puts the cap on the man again.

" 'Tis a clever little beast," says the farmer, "and anyone would be glad to have him. I'll give you the seed anyway and we'll see can you pay at harvest time."

" 'Tis you that are a help in time of need," says Con Og to Blaheen, and they going home with bags of seed in the cart. "All will be well with us yet."

But when they get home Con More is worse. " 'Tis a judgment on me for driving away my son," he says. "I'll have

to ask Dan Donavan to help me. We've a donkey now and seed too. But what are they without strength for the work?" Con Og has to go to the Donavans then with the message.

When Dan Donavan comes—the brother to Sheila he is—it's a hard bargain he drives. This is it. He'll do the work and Con More can have his living off the place, but house and land are to be his and his family's forever. Con More must sign his name to a paper. Dan is a hard man, too. And he has no liking for Con More.

The next day is a sad one for Con Og. His father gets into the cart in the morning and goes off, driving Blaheen, and Dan Donavan walking beside them. It's to see a lawyer in the town they are going.

"What good is it to have you and the seed?" says Con Og to Blaheen when he has a minute to talk with the donkey

before they leave. "It's afraid I am of these papers from lawyers."

"There's one place only for such papers," say Blaheen. "'Tis in the fire." He wags his ears and says nothing more.

When they are gone, Con Og thinks to himself this would not be happening, at all, at all, if his brother Shaun were with them. He'd not let land and house go out of the family. And Con thinks, "I could search for him. Since I've no knowledge of where to look I'll go to the town and maybe find someone to tell me." He walks to the town then. Little he knows what he is to find. 'Tis the stranger in city clothes he is looking for to ask where he should go, the stranger being a man who has traveled to other places. It's a great wonder entirely what happened. He found the stranger down on the strand. Sitting on a rock the man is, looking over

the western sea. With the hat off him, the stranger has a look of his brother Shaun. And when Con Og comes up to him, he sees that it is the brother of his heart. It is Shaun, glory be God! And no stranger at all. Shaun catches the boy up in his arms and it's crying they are with the joy of it.

"Will you come home now?" says Con Og, after Shaun has been telling of his travels and how he found no place better than home. It's no taste he had for wandering and being at the mercy of the world. "Sure, the world is wide and weary," said Shaun, "but I'll have to be going off again if my father has put his name to the paper. 'Twas told me today by Sheila, and it's thinking I was that I'd soon be on a ship, sailing the western sea."

"Come home first and we'll see," said Con Og. "All may be well with us yet."

They are at the hill above the house when they see Dan Donovan in the cart driving Blaheen. And far down the road is Con More. He that rode in the morning is walking now.

“ ’Tis the master of the house and the cart and the donkey that rides,” says Shaun, and he is grieved at what he sees.

Blaheen set her feet though at the turning to the Donavans and would only go to her own home.

The three men had talk in the house then. It's long faces they had. And Con Og, too. “Glad I am to see you, Shaun,” says the father, “and I ask your forgiveness. But I fear there is no home for you here since I put my name to the paper,” says he. “You come too late. ’Tis a punishment on me that I'll lose my two sons as well as my home. It's to the place for homeless boys they'll be taking Con Og, more's the pity.

I've given my word and signed my name, and I'll not be taking it back."

Dan Donavan says only, "It's punishment you should have, Con More, for your hard heart and not wishing Shaun to marry my sister. It's right enough that you should suffer for it."

"Now that Shaun is back and can do as he chooses?" asks Con More. "Is it so then even now?"

"Even now," says dark Dan. It's plain he wouldn't like to be giving in to Con More.

'Twas then that Con Og stole out of the house. He put his arms around the donkey's neck and cried. "Tears will do nothing," says Blaheen. "Get some more writing on the paper, someway or anyway at all, then when it is held to dry at the fire let a lick of the flame come out and

burn it up. Sure it's only a paper between you and all happiness."

As Con Og goes back, he is thinking it's a pagan Blaheen is after all, and he can't be burning up the paper, it being his father's word and all. But anyway when he comes in to the house, he says, "Is there a day and a year on the paper? No paper is any good at all without a day and a year on it, for Shaun told me that long ago." They look and there is no day or the year on the paper!

"It's cheated I am," says Dan Donavan.

"No," says Con More. "I gave you my word and I'll put the day and the year on it."

Shaun brings the ink bottle and the pen, and Con More puts on the day and the year. When they give the paper to Dan, it comes to Con Og that only one person can

destroy it. Sure the only one is the man it belongs to. He runs to the fire and pokes it well to make the flames blaze up, saying a prayer to Patrick he is, Patrick of the blessed fire.

"Take the paper to the fire," says Con Og. Catching hold of Dan he is with both hands. "Hold it close to dry the ink," he says. "And if you drop it in the flames 'twill be your own doing."

Dan holds the paper to the fire.

"Closer," says Con Og. Dan looks at the boy, and he sees what Con Og has in mind. Sure Dan had no wish to take the farm and home from Shaun, and he just back from far places.

"Is this close enough?" Dan says. He is into the fireplace now, and his face red from the blaze.

"Closer still, in the name of Saint Patrick," says Con Og.

Dan laughs then, and he puts the paper closer still. Then a lick of the flame comes out and in a flash the paper is gone.

“Ah well,” says Dan. “It’s not much I care for farming anyhow. It’s a great wish I have to be traveling. It’s journeying to far places I’ll be now that Shaun is back and he’ll be bringing my sister here to be his wife. Sure the hard feelings I had for Con More are gone up the chimney with the lawyer’s paper.” He leaves then and the last words he says to them are, “A blessing on all here.”

“Will you plant now after Patrick’s Day?” says Con Og to his father.

“That I will,” says Con More, “with the seed you brought and the donkey to pull the plow, and my son Shaun to help and to gladden my days. And never more will I doubt the goodness of God.”

“Nor the help of St. Patrick for us all,”

says Con Og. And he brings the book for Shaun to read out of it to him by the fire.

The next day was Patrick's Day. So they put a cross of straw on the door to show the faith Patrick taught. And they went to church with shamrocks pinned to their coats. Sure Patrick used the shamrock to teach the Oneness and Threeness of God, and hasn't it been the sign and symbol of Ireland ever since!

It's a day of fun and feasting they had. Father Tom came and not a word out of him about taking Con Og away, for Sheila was there. It's great scrubbing of chairs and tables and all she had done with Con Og helping. And she brought him a suit he could wear to school. So it's very fine and clean he looked.

"One thing," said Shaun to his father and they sitting down to a dinner of fresh

salmon, "when next you go to town, you'll ride going and you'll ride coming back."

And Blaheen had a meal of turnips, that being what he liked best. It's little Blaheen talked after that. With Con Og away all day at his schooling, perhaps he got out of the way of it. Anyway, it's a fine day they had, the sky being bright and clear like their happy thoughts. 'Tis well known, of course, that in Ireland there is always sunshine on Patrick's Day.

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